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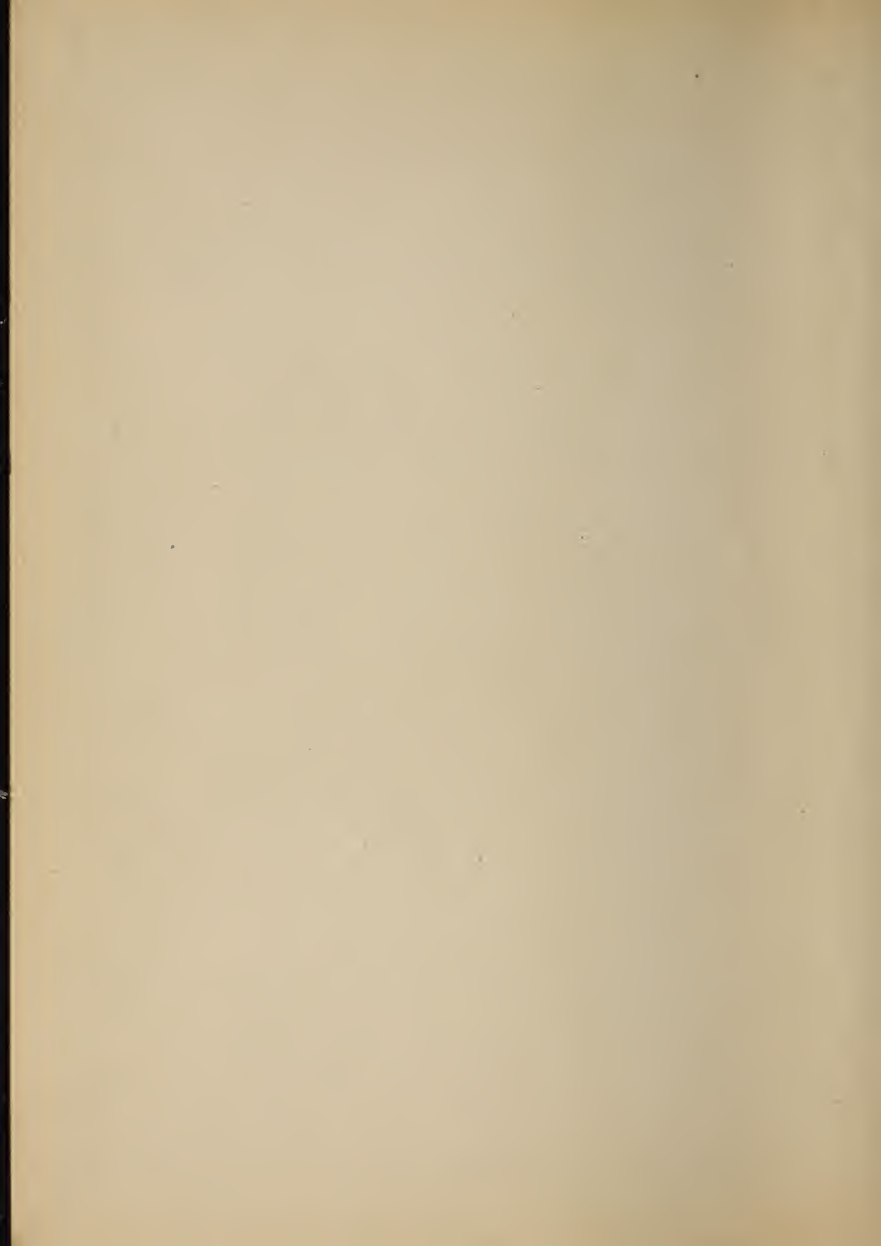
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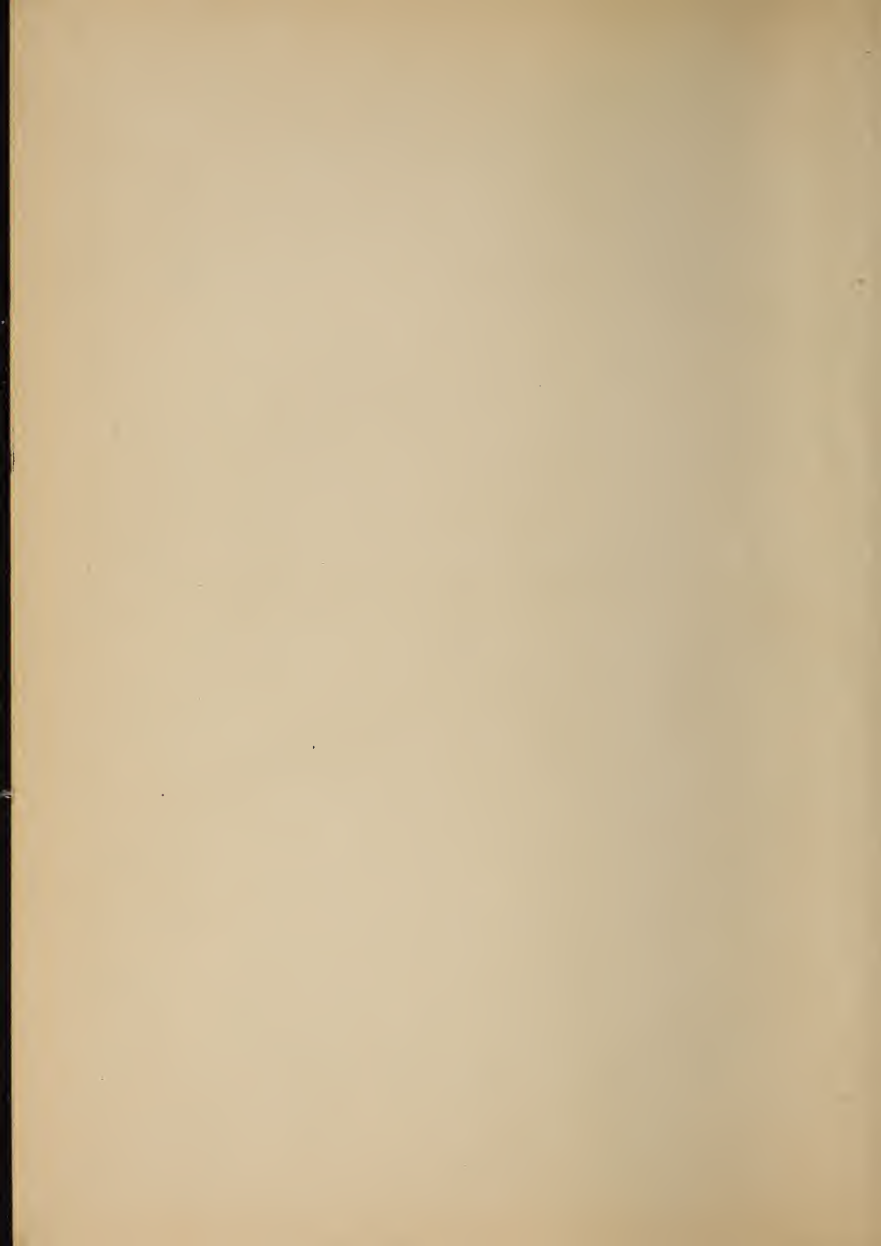
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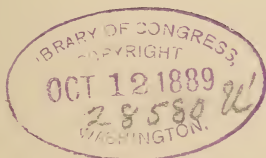


# ASPIRATIONS AND INFLUENCES



# ASPIRATIONS AND INFLUENCES

*orig* BY  
H. CLAY TRUMBULL  
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## PREFACE.

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Lessons from one man's experiences and observations will not be of value to all. But lessons from any man's experiences and observations will be of value to some. No man stands, in his feelings and sympathies, for his entire race. But every man, in his sympathies and feelings, stands for a class.

Hence it is, that whatever truths have made a profound impression on a man in the progress of his life-course are likely to make a correspondent impression on others who are like him, if he can bring those truths with any vividness before them. And when a series of related truths have excited interest in their detached separateness, they will hardly fail to excite fresh interest in their exhibited relation to one another and to a common central truth.

The essays in this volume are an outcome of their writer's observings and experienings in his varied life-course. They were received with interest as editorial contributions in the pages of *The Sunday School Times*, while appearing there, one by one, during a term of ten years or more; and their republication has been urged by many who desire them for preservation in a permanent form. They are now presented in a new light, in a logical order for the elucidation and emphasis of a truth which is common to them all.

The gaining of the thoughts of this volume has not been without cost to its writer. His hope is that the considering of them will not be without stimulus and profit to its readers.

H. C. T.

PHILADELPHIA,  
*August 14, 1889.*



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## I.

### *THE VALUE OF DAY-DREAMS.*

---

Day-dreams are more common than night-dreams; and their practical value is far greater. Sleep that is best and truest is a dreamless sleep; but a waking life that is without dreams is likely to be an aimless and an ill-furnished life; as, indeed, a waking life with dreams may be.

A "dream" is defined as "a matter which has an imaginary reality;" as "a series of thoughts not under the command of reason." The root-meaning of the Anglo-Saxon word "dream" is "melody;" a pleasing succession of appeals to the finer senses. The same root shows itself, on the one hand, in "drum," and on the other hand, in "drone;" as, on the one hand, a melody—or a day-dream—may arouse to action, or, on the other hand, it may lull to sloth. To dream is to allow

fancy and imagination and unchecked anticipation to have sway of the mind, or to give shape and color to the thoughts. Dream-life is the mental picturing of what may be, of what might be, or of what the individual soul would fain have to be. Day-dreams are the fancy-melodies which represent and which allure the innermost personality of the dreamer. And so it is that day-dreams are a potent factor in the best and truest human lives; as too often they are in lives which are wasted and ruined. The day-dreams are no less an element of power in every life which indulges them, whether those dreams present pictures of noble achievement, or bring to mind scenes of sinful indulgence.

Child-life is largely a life of day-dreams, and children have joy and hope, as again they are susceptible to special temptations, in proportion to their power of dreaming. It is the dream of manliness which gives zest to the tottering boy in his "playing horse" with an older brother, or with a

chair to which he has fastened his twine reins. It is the dream of womanly love and womanly ministry which enables the little girl to tend her doll so faithfully, whether that doll be a marvel of Parisian workmanship, or the clumsiest rag-baby. Not the toy itself, but the day-dream into which it is taken, is the source of a child's enjoyment in all amusement with the plaything of the hour. Without day-dreaming, childhood would not be true childhood. A Christian missionary among a degraded people said, in illustration of the depths of wretchedness into which that people had fallen, "Nothing could show more clearly the utter hopelessness of the life of these poor creatures, than the fact that I have never yet seen one of their children at play." God pity a child who never has a day-dream! God pity the man, or the woman, who has lost the child-power of day-dreaming!

Napoleon said that "imagination rules the world." And the imagination which sways the minds of such masters of men as Napo-

leon, gives shape to their day-dreams of empire and conquest. It was in the day-dreams of Alexander of Macedon that the centre of the world's ruling first moved from Persia westward. The day-dreams of Cæsar and of Cleopatra and of Anthony caused the banners of victory to wave hither and thither, with the following of Rome's legions. And the day-dreams of Charlemagne, of William the Conqueror, of Gustavus Adolphus, and of Peter the Great, found their realizing in new governments which should continue their forms, or leave their impress, for generation after generation. What issues were the result of the day-dreaming of Muhammad and of Columbus! And how men watch to-day for the outcome of the day-dreams of Bismarck, and of Giers, and of Boulanger, and of Gladstone!

General Grant tells, in his Memoirs, of the day-dream which filled his mind when, as a young cadet at West Point, he first saw the imposing presence of General Winfield Scott, then the commanding general of the armies

of the United States. That day-dream pictured the young cadet in the place of the veteran commander; without the impressive stature of the great chieftain, but not without a corresponding record of valiant service. Who can doubt that such a day-dream was a help to, as it was a prophecy of, its own realizing?

General Grant said to a personal friend, long afterward, that his habit of day-dreaming never left him. When, after his resignation from the army, he was working away on a farm near St. Louis, he was accustomed to carry into the city a load of wood for sale, and then to ride back in his empty cart. As he rode, he dreamed. His longing had been to command a regiment. And his wish, which now seemed a vain one, was to see Europe, with his good wife to share his sight-seeing. A favorite dream of his, as he rode homeward in the dusky evening, on that empty wood-cart, was of himself as again in the army, this time as a full colonel; and then the dream would take him, together



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with Mrs. Grant, over the ocean for a tour of Europe. And that day-dream was as an inspiration and a hope for him until, at the close of his second term as President of the United States, with the military honors of a great chieftain freely accorded to him, accompanied by his wife and children, he passed from country to country, as in a triumphal march, receiving the welcome of crowned heads and the greeting of glad hearts, all the world around.

It is not more reasonable to say, in this instance, that the day-dream of the soldier-farmer had no part in the successful endeavors of the commander, the executive, and the citizen-traveler, than it would be to say that the day-dream of the boy Whittington by the roadside near London had no part in giving hope and energy to that boy in his struggles toward the Lord Mayoralty of the great metropolis. In the one case, as in the other,

“Still, through the paltry stir and strife,  
Glows down the wished Ideal;  
And Longing molds in clay what Life  
Carves in the marble Real.”



In the daily life of the humble toiler, as in the imaginings of the child and in the out-reachings of the man of genius, it is the dreaming of unattained possibilities which makes drudgery endurable, or which gives hope as a barrier to despair. The boy whose mother is left widowed and impoverished, dreams of being the owner of the old homestead, and of making it the new home of her whose love inspires him; and because of his dream he struggles on until its fulfilling. The mother dreams bright dreams for her one son, and whether he wilfully strives with or against her dreams, her dreaming enables her to persevere in his behalf against all discouragements and hindrances.

Many whose lot is a life of privation and of disappointment, would despair if it were not for their continual dreaming of better things to come.

“Dream after dream ensues;  
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,  
And still are disappointed;”

and yet they dream again. And without the .

help of day-dreams, rarely would a human life be joyous or be potent for good.

Day-dreaming has its dangers. The dreams themselves may be in the wrong direction, unworthy of a true and noble nature. Or, again, while dreams of good they may be idly indulged merely as dreams. Dreams of sin are delusive inducements to sin. Dreams of high achieving are not achievings, but they are calls to such attainment; and seldom is there found a life of high achieving except under the spur and inspiration of continuous day-dreams.

All modern poetry takes its start and its shaping from the day-dreams of Dante. His early day-dream was of a poem which should be worthy of her who had prompted his dreaming. And thenceforward he lived for the realizing of that dream. "The spell of boyhood is never broken, through the ups and downs of life. His course of thought advances, alters, deepens, but is continuous. From youth to age, from the first glimpse to the perfect work, the same idea abides

with him, 'even from the flower till the grape was ripe.' . . . It was the dream and hope of too deep and strong a mind to fade and come to naught—to be other than the achievement and crown of life."

"Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,  
What exultations trampling on despair,  
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong,  
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,  
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,  
This mediæval miracle of song!"

And every man's deepest and truest spiritual nature finds its inspiration in and through his purest and worthiest day-dreams. It is what he hopes for, or what he longs for, or what he is sure would be admirable if it were to be, that prompts a true man to his noblest strivings, and that sustains him under his heaviest burden-bearing. If he were without those dreams, he would be without the efforts at their realizing.

Now, as of old, God reveals himself and his plans to his children in their dreams; only it is in the day-dreams, for the shaping of

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which they are themselves responsible according to his Word,—not in the ordinary visions of the night,—that men may find this revelation of the truth of God. Blessed are they who find and serve and honor God in their day-dreaming!

## II.

### *THE BLESSING OF UNREST.*

---

It was in mid-ocean, on a winter's passage across the Atlantic, eastward. A storm was raging. The great steamer rolled and pitched, by turns. Her beams creaked, and her mighty frame quivered with the convulsive struggles of her engines and the sea. At the dead of night, her passengers were in their stateroom berths, many of them restless, and longing for rest.

Suddenly, on that steamer, there was silence and rest, unlooked for. The engines stood still. The creaking and quivering had ceased. The great steamer no longer rolled or pitched. And, in an instant, those passengers whose chiefest longings had been for rest, started up in their berths, more disturbed than by all the disturbing restlessness which had preceded this repose. Rest! at such a time, and

in such a place as this! Rest! when winds and waves are at battle, and a ceasing to struggle seems a yielding of hope! Rest! Is this the rest of death? Only in the trough of the sea, and with the engines and the rudder useless, can there be such rest as this. Oh for the old unrest, against which tired nature so rebelled!

There was terror, and a new longing, in that untimely rest. And when, after a little season for the repairs of the steamer's shattered bow, the familiar quiver came again to the mighty frame, the engines rumbled and plunged as before, the beams creaked with their accustomed strain, and the mammoth vessel pitched and rolled and tossed, in the renewed struggle with the opposing elements, many a passenger who had stood or lain with bated breath, in that period of unwonted rest, thanked God for the restored unrest, with a new sense of its often unnoted blessedness.

It is not alone upon the sea, in a winter's storm, at the dead of night, that there is a blessedness in unrest, even while the whole

soul is longing for rest. Wherever there is a need of struggle, or a desire for progress, or a hope of difficult attainment,—there, passive rest is as the shadow of death, and unrest is the symbol and the evidence of abounding life. Only through present unrest, can abiding rest be attained to. Only through the experience of unrest, can abiding rest be found a blessing.

In the dying-song of Moses, the Lord is represented as lovingly forbidding passive rest to his chosen son Israel; as shaking him out from his place of satisfied repose, in order to his restless activities in the needed struggles of life and progress: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttering over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him." So the Lord stirreth up the nest of every loved child of his, in order that that child may use his wings in aspiring flight.

It was after Dr. Horace Bushnell had found his plans of life-work broken in upon by ill-



health, and his hope of rest in his loved Hartford home rendered vain, by the necessity laid on him of prolonged absence in travel, that he preached his famous sermon on Spiritual Dislodgments, from the text: "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity; therefore his taste [has] remained in him, and his scent is not changed." And the truth he then brought out from that text, is a truth of universal application: that passive rest of soul is inconsistent with spiritual progress and high spiritual attainment; that only through the trials of weary unrest can any blessing of final and abiding rest come to the human soul.

George Herbert sang of this unrest, as "the pulley" of God's providence, by which man is drawn ever upward toward infinite and eternal good. The saintly poet pictured God as giving to man, at his creation, every possible gift save *rest*, and withholding that, lest its satisfying possession should deprive



man of all longing for a better state than his present one.

“For if I should, said He,  
Bestow this jewel also on my creature,  
He would adore my gifts instead of me,  
And rest in nature, not the God of nature;  
So, both should losers be.”

Let man keep the other gifts of grace, He said,

“But keep them with refining restlessness.  
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,  
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness  
May toss him to my breast.”

Sure it is, that every true soul is tried with constant unrest; and that because of its constant unrest there is in every true soul a continual and an unsatisfied longing for an unattained rest. “The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.” That which is beyond our present possession, is to our thought better than the best which is yet secured to us. And sure it is, also, that the highest and noblest service of every true soul is obviously in the direction of that

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soul's restless aspirations. There is oftentimes great gain to us in what we know to be a vain desire. That which we can only long for, may be a means of our holiest upward strugglings.

As Lowell phrases this truth:

"Longing is God's fresh, heavenward will,  
With our poor earthward, striving;  
We quench it, that we may be still  
Content with merely living;  
But would we learn that heart's full scope  
Which we are hourly wronging,  
Our lives must climb from hope to hope,  
To realize our longing."

And Owen Meredith voices the thought of many an outreaching soul, when he cries:

"O heavenly power of human wishes!  
For as wings to birds, and as fins to fishes,  
Are a man's desires, to the soul of a man.  
'Tis by these, and by these alone, it can  
Wander at will through its native sphere,  
Where the beauty that's far is the bliss that is  
near."

If it were not for our restless longing and

wishing, we should abide contented in our lower estate, and should lose both the possibility of high attainment, and the certain gain of noble strivings after the unattainable.

We often wonder, and still oftener we regret, that we have been called to lives of such strange unrest, in spheres where rest was so desirable, and where it would even seem to have been most natural. Our thought is, that if we could only have been spared all these months or years of vain longings, if we could only have had granted to us the one thing which has caused us all these wearying and hopeless strivings, our life-powers could have been so much more effectively employed for good; and we could have been so much happier, while accomplishing so much more for others, for ourselves, and for God.

But, if we look carefully and wisely at the lessons of our own experience, as well as at this all-pervading truth in the plan of God's providence, we shall see that the best there is in us, and the best that has been done by us, are manifestly a result of our much

regretted unrest; that it is because the rest was denied us, that we have been outreaching and on-going in the direction of better and greater good, continually. Had God granted to us the rest we have longed for, it would have kept us in the passive uselessness of the fledgling bird in its home nest, or of the mammoth steamer in the trough of the sea.

There is, indeed, nothing for which we have more reason to be profoundly grateful to God, than the fact that God has never permitted us to be fully satisfied with what we have or with what we are. What God has withheld from us, while holding it before us, has, in many an instance, proved more of a blessing than that which he has granted to us. The unattained desire has been a means of our ever-attaining progress.

Whenever you find a preacher or a writer who moves your very soul by his words of tremulous and sympathetic power; whenever you look into a face that shows depths of character and profounder depths of feeling;

whenever you note a tireless and a tender worker for the cause of Christ, in a lesser or a larger sphere; whenever you feel a strange and an exceptional charm in the pervading influence of a true man or a true woman, in the realm of quiet social converse,—you may be sure that you have before you another illustration of the blessing of weary unrest; for there is never such power, such attainment, or such a charm, to a soul that has been always at rest.

Even the spiritual rest which is assured to every trustful child of God, is a rest in restlessness. It is in a land where there are giants to fight, and walled cities to take, and ceaseless activities to pursue. Divine restlessness is a chief characteristic of that rest—which remaineth to the people of God.

It is hard to be always restless; but nothing that is good is easy. Dying is easy; it is living that is hard. Rest is the symbol of death. Unrest is the assurance of life. Let us thank God that we live, and that we are unceasingly restless!

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" I cannot choose but live, because I die,  
And, when I am not dead, how glad am I!  
Yet, when I am thus glad, for sense of pain,  
And careful am, lest I should careless be,  
Then do I desire for being glad again,  
And fear lest carelessness take care from me.  
Amidst these restless thoughts, this rest I find,  
For those that rest not here, there's rest behind."

### III.

#### *THE PRACTICAL POWER OF SENTIMENT.*

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To say of any lofty aspiration, or of any prompting to action, that "it is only a sentiment," is, in the popular mind, to throw discredit on that which is thus characterized, and to classify it as unpractical, and therefore not worthy of the thought and endeavors of a person of sound sense. Yet there is nothing in all this world so practical as sentiment; nothing worthier of the utmost energies and of the innermost yearnings of any true man, or of any true woman.

What is "sentiment"? Primarily, it is perception by the more subtile senses; it is feeling which is a result of one's entirest and most distinctive personality. It "denotes a refined sensibility on subjects affecting the heart." In contrast with the results of cold



reasoning, we speak of "the *sentiments* of the heart," as over against "the *opinions* of the mind." And just so surely as heart-power is superior to head-power, with this world as it is, is sentiment more potent, and incidentally more practical, than opinion. This we recognize, when we ask concerning a man who has expressed his formal opinions on a subject: "Yes; but are those his real sentiments?" And so it is, as Dugald Stewart tells us, that "the word sentiment . . . expresses . . . very happily those complex determinations of the mind which result from the co-operation of our entire rational powers, and of our moral feelings." And so it comes to pass, that the real measure of any true man is the depth and the power of his sentiment.

There is all the difference in the world between "sentiment" and "sentimentalism;" as great a difference as between "child-likeness" and "childishness." Child-likeness is the attribute of the wisest of the sons of men, and is the type of him who is greatest in the



kingdom of heaven. Childishness is a trait unworthy even of an untutored child. "Sentimentalism" is the quality of resting inactive in mere feeling. "Sentiment" is that sway of the feelings which carries one out of himself toward an object of love and life which is dearer to him than rest or safety or possession. Sentiment is ennobling and practical; sentimentalism is ignoble and unpractical. Let no man confound the two, in his estimate of the worth and the power of either.

There is no sphere where sentiment, in its best and truest meaning, is not the prevailing force in impelling to high endeavor. Both the Old Testament and the New give the foremost place in religion to *love*; and what is love, if it is not a sentiment? What is *patriotism*, but a sentiment? What is *human affection*, but a sentiment? What is love of duty, or love in duty,—duty toward God, duty toward country, duty toward our fellows,—if it is not a sentiment?

When Edward Everett was pleading for the completion of Bunker Hill monument,

he confronted the objection that this was "only a sentiment," and that it had no practical worth in our national life. "I am asked," he said, "What good will this monument do? And I ask, What good does anything do? What is good? Does anything do good?"

Then he proceeded to show that the digging of canals, or the building of railroads, or the prosecution of any means of wealth, is *in itself* of no immediate advantage, but depends for its ultimate value on its relations to the interests and to the welfare of humanity; that, in fact, there is "no good in the mere animal life, except that it is the physical basis of that higher moral existence, which resides in the soul, the heart, the mind, the conscience,—in good principles, good feelings, and the good actions (and the more disinterested, the more entitled to be called good) which flow from them."

"Now, sir," he concluded: "I say that generous and patriotic sentiments, sentiments which prepare us to serve our country—feelings like those which carried Prescott and

Warren and Putnam to the battle-field, are good,—good, humanly speaking, of the *highest* order. It is good to have them, good to encourage them, good to commemorate them; and whatever tends to animate and strengthen such feelings, does as much right down practical good as filling up low grounds and building railroads.”

The love of one's country's flag is only a sentiment; yet brave men are ready to die for that flag on the field of battle; and when in the hush of peace the weather-beaten, bullet-pierced, stained and tattered old flag is borne proudly through the city streets, on some memorial day, strong men shed tears at its sight;—“because of its associations,” you may say; but what is any power of association except a “sentiment”? Associations of time: the New Year, Christmas, a birthday, a marriage-day, a death-day, some anniversary tenderer than all these, it may be, —what is the peculiar charm of such a time, but a sentiment? Associations of place: the old homestead, the little school-house, the

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village church, the woods, the meadow, the brook, the shore, the quiet graveyard;—that which hallows each of these is a sentiment.

“That’s hallowed ground—where, mourned and missed,  
The lips repose, our love has kissed;—  
But where’s their memory’s mansion? Is’t  
Yon church-yard’s towers?  
No! in ourselves their souls exist,  
A part of ours.”

Associations of material things: a mother’s Bible, an old arm-chair, a faded flower, a lock of hair,

“That little shoe in the corner,  
So worn and wrinkled and brown;”—

is it aught but a sentiment that makes such a trifle a priceless treasure?

Literature has power and permanency in its swaying influence, in proportion to its measure of profound sentiment. It is true, in a sense, that that alone can be classified as real literature, which appeals directly to the heart; that only those writings which are

from the heart to the heart live on from age to age. Even in the sphere of inspired writings, it is many times found that sentiment is a pre-eminent force over the mind of the reader. The poetry of the Psalms of David has swayed the human race a thousand-fold more mightily than the mere chronicle of David's life-story; and the abiding glory of Solomon is not the record of his temple-building, but to the memory of his inspired heart-teachings. Painting and sculpture are but appeals to human sentiment; but what would this prosaic world be without their poetic influence? Music is a sentiment; yet music sways human feelings as if it were an emanation of the Divine.

Cardinal Newman, speaking of the wondrous power of music, says inquiringly: "Can it be that those mysterious stirrings of heart, and keen emotions, and strange yearnings after we know not what, and awful impressions from we know not whence, should be wrought in us by what is unsubstantial, and comes and goes, and begins and ends in itself?

No; they have escaped from some higher sphere; they are the outpourings of eternal harmony in the medium of created sound; they are echoes from our Home; they are the voices of angels, or the Magnificat of saints, or the living laws of Divine guidance, or the Divine attributes; something they are besides themselves, which we cannot compass, which we cannot utter,—though mortal man, and he perhaps not otherwise distinguished above his fellows, has the power of eliciting them.” They are, in fact, in the realm of living sentiment, and not of lifeless reason.

So mighty is the sentiment-swaying power of music, that the bravest soldiers are afraid of it when it comes in conflict with a trying duty. The bands of the Highland regiments are, it is said, forbidden to play, during their foreign service, such a plaintive home-suggesting tune as “Lochaber No More,” a popular Scottish ballad of exile. Similarly, the Swiss bands are forbidden to play, while abroad, a *ranz des vaches*, or one of the



melodies which the Alpine herdsmen play upon their alp-horns while driving home their flocks.

As showing that every heart is human, and that in every land, and among persons of every race,

“The bravest are the tenderest,  
The loving are the daring,”

Dr. S. Wells Williams gives this delightful rendering of an ancient Chinese poem, in illustration of this common truth:—

“’Twas night—the tired soldiers were peacefully sleeping;

The low hum of voices was hushed in repose;  
The sentries, in silence, a strict watch were keeping

’Gainst surprise or a sudden attack of their foes;

“When a low mellow note on the night air came stealing;

So soothingly over the senses it fell,—  
So touchingly sweet,—so soft and appealing,—  
Like the musical notes of an ærial bell.

“The sleepers arouse, and with beating hearts listen;

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In their dreams they had heard that weird music  
before;  
It touches each heart;—with tears their eyes  
glisten;  
For it tells them of those they may never see  
more.

"Bright visions of home through their mem'ries  
came thronging,  
Panorama-like passing in front of their view;  
They were *home-sick*;—no power could withstand  
that strange yearning;  
The longer they listened, the more home-sick  
they grew.

"Each looked at the other; but no word was  
spoken,—  
The music insensibly leading them on.—  
They must return home.—Ere the daylight had  
broken,  
The enemy looked, and behold! they were gone.

"There's a magic in music,—a witchery in it,  
Indescribable either with tongue or with pen.—  
The flute of Chang Liang, in one little minute,  
Had stolen the courage of eight thousand men."

In our American civil war there was a  
notable instance of the swaying power of  
sentiment as expressed in home music heard



by soldiers in the field. The two armies were encamped over against one another on the opposite banks of the Rappahannock, when a military band on the Union side of the river played in alternation the favorite airs of the opposing forces. As John Randolph Thompson tells the story,

“Down flocked the soldiers to the banks,  
Till, margined by its pebbles,  
One wooded shore was blue with ‘Yanks,’  
And one was gray with ‘Rebels.’”

The tune of “Dixie” aroused the “yelling of the Rebels,” while “Yankee Doodle” started the shrieks of the “Boys in Blue.” But when all on both sides were thus excited to the utmost, another tune hushed them all to silence:

“All silent now the Yankees stood  
All silent now the Rebels.

“No unresponsive soul had heard  
That plaintive note’s appealing,  
So deeply ‘Home, Sweet Home,’ had stirred  
The hidden founts of feeling.”

A vision of his home was in every soldier’s

heart, and the differences that separated him from his fellows across the river were all forgotten as he and they turned back to their camps in tender thoughtfulness when

"The vision vanished, as the strain  
And daylight died together."

It was "only a sentiment" evoked by memory;

"But memory, waked by music's art,  
Expressed in simplest numbers,  
Subdued the sternest Yankee's heart,  
Made light the Rebel's slumbers."

It is sentiment which makes every-day home-life a joy and a blessing, where otherwise it would be toilsome drudgery. It is the poetry of affection, which enables many a tired wife and mother to labor on and to endure, through the dull and senseless prose of her existence. It is the sentiment of filial and fraternal love which gives zest to the efforts of children to be faithful to their parents and kindly toward one another in our matter-of-fact world. It is the sentiment of

an unselfish and an outgoing friendship,—a friendship which finds its highest pleasure in loving and in serving, with no craving desire of possession or return,—which is the most ennobling and inspiriting of human affections, and which, in all the ages, has been found to prompt to the best achievements of which humanity is capable. Everywhere and always it is sentiment which is the chiefest force, as a swaying agency of the human heart; the differences are in the nature and the object and the measure of that sentiment. That sentiment which rises to the highest ideal, is ever that which rises from the profoundest depths of a consecrated being; and he who sways others mightily, is always one who himself is mightily swayed.

When General Joseph R. Hawley was advocating, in the United States Congress, the fitting observance of our Centenary of American Independence, he was met by the sneer, that “after all this is but a sentiment.” “I know it,” responded the General, in his red-hot earnestness; “but I haven’t a sentiment that

I'm not ready to die for." Whatever sentiment is worth living for, is worth dying for, —if dying be in the line of its right achieving. And it is good to be so possessed with a noble sentiment, as to count it a minor matter whether life or death be a result of its expression and advocacy.

#### IV.

#### *IS PROSPERITY DESIRABLE?*

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In the very nature of the case, everybody wants prosperity. And in the very nature of the case, prosperity may be the worst thing in the world for a person; the last thing in the world to be desired or sought after by that person. As a preliminary, therefore, to any reaching out after prosperity, it is well for us to decide whether or not prosperity is a desirable thing for ourselves. Prosperity is evidently desirable for some people; but is it so for us? The answer to that question depends on what we mean by prosperity.

"Prosperity" primarily means "according to one's hope," "agreeable to one's wishes." But not every man hopes or wishes for the same thing; nor are all men's hopes and wishes alike worthy; hence a man's standard

of prosperity is good or bad, according to the man's standard of character and attainment. If what he hopes for is really desirable, then to him prosperity is desirable; but if his wishes are unworthy, prosperity is in his case undesirable.

If a man is a mail-robber (with or without a contract); if he is a bank robber (on a salary or only on a commission); if he is a stock speculator (with his own funds or with other people's money),—his idea of prosperity includes the overthrow of somebody else; he hopes to rise by the downfall of others. And a large share of the prosperity that is desired among men, take the whole world over, is a prosperity that can be secured only at the cost of other people's possessions or comfort. *That* prosperity is not desirable. It is not right prosperity; it is not true prosperity. It *is* prosperity in the sense of being in the direction of one's hopes as they are; it is *not* prosperity, in the sense of being in the direction of one's hopes as they ought to be. Hence it follows, that

prosperity is desirable only to those whose hopes are desirable; that prosperity itself is a good thing only when it is in the direction of wishes which are good, wishes which are worthy of a man's better nature and nobler destiny. To decide, therefore, whether or not prosperity is desirable to us, we must first decide whether our hopes and wishes are what they should be.

Men are very likely to judge of prosperity, for themselves or for others, by mere outward show; by that which can be seen of possessions or of success. They count health, and wealth, and a foremost place in the competitions of life, as essential elements of prosperity; without seeking to know the effects or results of all these on the inner life and character, and on the ultimate destiny, of the possessor. If their eyes were clearer, they might come to see real prosperity in what before seemed adversity, and real adversity in what had the appearance of prosperity. They would see that in many an instance the man who has health and strength is distanced



in both enjoyment and achievement by the man of feeble frame and of invalid body; and that it was the former's possession which caused his lack, while the latter's lack led to his acquisitions. They would see, also, that the rich man often fails of finding the pleasures of using money, while a poor man lives a life of personal comfort through his very poverty. They would see that many a man who has been kept in the background is brought to the front because of his keeping back; and that often the real victor is the defeated man. They would see that success frequently means ruin, while disaster is but a stepping-stone to success. As a consequence of all this, they would come to be more solicitous to have hopes and wishes that might safely be realized, than to have the realization of their existing wishes and hopes.

To a child of God, true prosperity is what God would choose for that person, rather than what that person would choose for himself. And God's standard for his children's



acquirements is not the standard of the natural heart for its own possessions. This truth is made clearer and clearer in the progress of divine revelation; all the way along from the picture-book lessons of the patriarchal histories, to the didactic teachings of the apostolic epistles.

Lord Bacon says: "Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New—which carrieth the greater benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's favor. Yet, even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs, as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath labored more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needleworks and embroideries, [that] it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon lightsome ground: judge, therefore, [in this]

of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odors—most fragrant, when they are incensed or crushed: for prosperity doth best discover vice; but adversity doth best discover virtue.”

It is not that God's standard has been different in different ages; but it is that God had to teach man by symbols before he could make clear to man the full truth symbolized. In the days of Job, prosperity was commonly measured among men by camels and oxen and sheep and asses, together with sons and daughters. So commonly was this the standard, that Satan himself had the idea that a man would love and serve God just in proportion to the pay of this sort which he received from God; and there was probably a good deal in the conduct of men to make Satan have this opinion. But God tested the loving confidence of Job by giving him a touch of New Testament prosperity, that is, adversity; and Job stood the test gloriously. It was after this testing that God

gave to Job a new prosperity according to man's standard of judging; for Job had been found a safe man to have prosperity by God's standard, and by man's standard also.

When Solomon, however, had everything that his heart could wish for, his heart went to wishing in wrong directions; and then it was that "the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel," and was seeking a prosperity according to its own standard instead of according to God's standard. Therefore it was that Solomon's prosperity was not so prosperous as Job's adversity; and hence it is that "the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath labored more in describing the afflictions of Job [and their results] than the felicities of Solomon [and their consequences]."

It is no new truth that is disclosed in the New Testament, when the blessing of God is shown to be in adversity quite as surely as in prosperity. It is simply a new disclosure of the truth which was symbolized in God's calling Abraham to leave his early home,

and become a pilgrim and a stranger in the world, with his richest possessions in promises which could have their fruition only after his own death. The symbolic promise of the Old Testament to the obedient children of Abraham was of "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths, springing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of olives and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." *That* promise an uninstructed Hebrew wanderer could understand.

But the New Testament promise of the same God to the faith-filled spiritual descendants of the same Abraham reads very differently: "In the world ye have tribulation." "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "Blessed

are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." This New Testament phrasing of the Divine promise is not so attractive to the natural eye as the Old Testament phrasing was; but to the eye of faith there is more to be grateful for in the later form than in the earlier. But this puts a new meaning into the question, Is it prosperity after God's sort, or after man's sort, that we are seeking, and for which we are longing?

The words "prosper," "prospered," "prosperous," "prospering," "prosperity," are found more than eighty times in the Old Testament. They sparkle to the natural eye all along the ancient record. But in the New Testament they appear only four times, and then each time with a peculiar signification, or a peculiar application, which can have a sparkle only to the quickened eye of faith. Twice Paul uses these words, and twice they are used by John.

Paul writes to the Romans that he is praying that now at length he may "have a prosperous journey by the will of God" to come to them at their city. Yet he knew that "bonds and afflictions" were awaiting him "in every city." He was praying to be carried through, to get his share of those bonds and afflictions in Rome. Is that the kind of prosperity you are praying for? Again Paul writes to the Corinthian Christians, urging every one of them to give every Lord's Day according "as God hath prospered him." Is that your thought in connection with prosperity? Are you thinking of success only as it will enable you to give more at next Sunday's collection (not in your will: Paul does not speak here of legacies)?

John uses the word "prosper" twice, or in two forms, in one sentence of an epistle. He prays that his loved follower may "prosper and be in health" even as the soul of that loved one prospereth. In other words, he wants to have that one have just as much prosperity outside as he already has inside



—no more. Are you willing to accept that as the standard of your prosperity? Do you want the Lord to see to it that you keep just as full (and just as lean) outside, in body and in all material possessions, as you are inside, in your heart and soul?

He who recalls the methods by which he has been helped upward and onward in the line of true spiritual progress, will see that his greatest gain has been made at times when he was receiving that which God knew was best for him, but which he himself deemed most undesirable. Recognizing the truth which underlies and is illustrated by these experiences and their results, he might well look for new prosperity as an outcome of new adversity. And his words might be:

“When I look back upon my former race,  
Seasons I see at which the inward ray  
More brightly burned, or guided some new way;  
Truth in its wealthier scene and nobler space,  
Given for my eye to range, and feet to trace.  
And next I mark, 'twas trial did convey,  
Or grief, or pain, or strange eventful day,

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To my tormented soul such larger grace.

So now, whene'er, in journeying on, I feel  
The shadow of the Providential Hand,

Deep breathless stirrings shoot across my breast,  
Searching to know what He will now reveal,  
What sin uncloak, what stricter rule command,  
And guiding me to work his full behest."



## V.

### *DESIRING, BUT NOT SEEKING*

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Desire is an impulse of the nature. Seeking is an act of the will. It is not always within our power to shape and regulate our desires; but it is within the scope of our powers to control and direct our seekings. Therefore it is that we, being what we are, are sure to have desires which we, being what we are, have no right to seek the gratifying of. Both our desirings and our seekings are measures and tests of our character; but our desirings indicate our character in its specific tendencies, while our seekings indicate our character in its deliberate purposes. And this is alike true whether the desiring and the seeking be noble or ignoble; worthy of us, or unworthy. It may be wrong for us to seek that which it is not wrong for us to desire; as, again, it is sure to be wrong for

us to seek that which it is not right for us to desire.

A man's nature may be such that he desires retaliation or revenge, when he has been injured. In such a case, it is clearly his duty not to seek that which he desires. So, again, if his nature prompts him to desire more than his fair share in a division of property, he would be wholly at fault in seeking the object of his desire. If, indeed, his natural desires are in the direction of an indulgence in appetite or passion or lust, it would, obviously, be wrong for him to seek the gratification of his desires.

So far, it is easy to see, that one's desires are not in themselves a justification of one's seeking. But when, on the other hand, one's desires are not unworthy, and especially when they are in the direction of that which is in itself good and admirable, the wrong of seeking that which is desired is not so apparent. Yet in many a case it clearly is wrong to seek that which it is not wrong to desire; or, in other words, that which, in such a case, may

properly be desired as a result, must not be sought as an end.

Take, for example, a soldier in battle, a physician in time of pestilence, a ship's captain on a sinking vessel with a crowd of passengers to look after, an engine-driver on an express locomotive at the time of an impending collision, or a man in any other peculiar peril under a sense of responsibility for others;—it is as proper as it is natural for him to desire his personal safety; but it is clearly his duty not to seek that object of his inevitable desire. His seeking in such a case must, in a sense, be in the opposite direction from his desire; he must persistently do that which imperils the life he desires to protect, and only as he refuses to seek safety, even while still desiring it, can he prove himself a true man, and evidence a *purpose* of character in a nobler direction than the natural *tendency* of his character.

Nor is it only on the plane of life-shielding that a man is likely to find himself forbidden to seek that which he is not forbidden to

desire. Popularity, the favorable opinion of the public generally, is a thing to be desired; but not only is it wrong for a man to seek popularity as an end of his striving, but it may be his plain duty to do that which is sure to lose him popularity; and in such a case his right seeking is contrary to his not-wrong desiring. Praise, honor, position, may be desired without impropriety, when it would be wrong to seek that which is thus desired. To desire a nomination for an exalted public station is not unworthy of any man who has any measure of fitness for that station; but to seek a nomination to such a position is unworthy of any man who otherwise has high fitness for the station desired by him. In every walk of life, in fact, a man is constantly called on to refrain from seeking honors and gains which he cannot, nor indeed ought to, refrain from desiring.

Even if it be in the realm of science, or literature, or art, or philanthropy, the man whose seeking is for that recognition and those rewards which he cannot but desire,

instead of for that attainment in the line of his own ideals which *ought to* command recognition and reward, but which *may not*, is never likely to do so well, nor can he show himself so worthily, as if his seeking were not directly to obtain the object of his desires. No seeking to win a desired prize is so high a stimulus to supreme endeavor, as is the seeking to compass one's noblest ideal—prize or no prize.

A good illustration of this truth is given in the life of Giovanni Duprè, an Italian sculptor, who died in Florence a few years ago. After several attempts—more or less successful—at winning prizes by artistic execution, Duprè was working hard for another prize, when word came to him that the proffered prize was withdrawn. "In his first fury of disappointment, he dashed his model to the ground, and broke it to pieces. And yet this very passion was but another step to his fame; for in his repentance he determined to atone for it by some grand work—a work which should

live, and which he would produce alone, with no thought of winning prizes, and with no help from academies." *Then* it was that he designed and wrought his Death of Abel, on which his future fame was builded; and which can never be forgotten by one who has looked on it in the Pitti Palace, in Florence. Had Duprè continued to work for prizes, his best energies would never have been called forth; and his permanent reputation would never have been secured. And so in every department of mental activity; prize-offering and prize-seeking cannot bring out the best that is in those who are possessed of high possibilities. Although it is every way proper for the artist to desire prizes, no artist can do his best work while seeking prizes.

A desire to be loved is not only universal, but it is universally commendable. God himself seems to desire the love of all his creatures; and whoever retains any measure of the image of God desires to be loved by his fellows. But it is not universally com-



mendable for one to seek a love which is eminently desirable. A true woman, for example, may inevitably, and without impropriety, desire the love of a true man whom she has come to know and to honor, when she must not seek his love; when, indeed, to seek his love would be the surest way of losing it. And as it is with a true woman, so, under other circumstances, it sometimes is with a true man. He may be forbidden to seek the special favor and approval of a noble woman whose esteem and regard it is not wrong for him to count desirable.

Yet again the seeking to evidence love may be nobler than the desiring to win love. Just here, indeed, it is that the distinctive peculiarity of the highest friendship is found; in its triumph of the unselfish seeking to evidence love for a friend, over the not unworthy and yet the selfly desire to secure love from a friend. To desire to have a friend is eminently natural; to seek to be a friend is gloriously preternatural. In other words, true friendship illustrates the truth that seeking to

be good is better than desiring to have good; and that seeking is not necessarily to be in the direction of one's desire.

Desire is, indeed, never a safe guide of conduct; but seeking ought always to be in the direction of right conduct. Our desires ought to be worthy and noble desires; but whether they are worthy and noble or unworthy and ignoble, our seeking ought to be that which, unmistakably, is both worthy and noble. We are not always directly responsible for our desires; but we are always directly responsible for our seekings. In every emergency, whether our desires are for food or dress or praise or fame or life or love, we are to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,—to seek to be and to do that which is right,—and then all of those desired things which it is best for us to have shall be added to us; and herein is the comfort and the gain of duty-doing.



## VI.

### *INCLINATION AS A HINDRANCE TO SUCCESS.*

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Unless a man has his heart in his work, he is not worth much for that work. Yet not every man can have his heart in the same kind of work. \* One man can give his whole heart only to one line of service, and another man only to another line of service. Either of these men would be out of place, and comparatively useless, in the sphere of the other. The success of either pivots on his being where he belongs. How to find one's real place and work in the world is, therefore, a question of practical moment for one's self and for those whom one is set to control or to counsel.

A widely prevalent thought in connection with this subject is, that one's natural or one's acquired *inclination* in a certain direction is

an indication of probable success in that direction—under favorable conditions. Yet, as a matter of fact, an inclination is more likely to be a hindrance than a help to success—in the direction of that inclining. And true gain in life ordinarily comes through resisting one's inclinations, rather than through following them.

An inclination is a natural or an acquired tendency, rather than an intelligent purpose. And with human nature as it is, one's tendencies are toward personal ease, rather than toward personal discomfort; toward personal indulgence, rather than toward personal constraint. One naturally inclines to do that which he can do with small effort, rather than to undertake that which will tax his utmost energies; and the longer one follows his inclinations, the more difficult it is for him to break away in another direction. Yet it is obvious that activity and struggle and self-denial are essential to the developing of one's powers and to one's attainment of any high success in the world. Hence it is that

inclination may prove a barrier to success, and that at the best it is a peril and a hindrance in one's life-course.

If, indeed, a young person inclines to over-eat, or to over-sleep, or to mope listlessly through the day, or to fly about in aimless motion, every parent or teacher recognizes the fact that *that* person ought to be trained away from his inclinations, rather than in their direction. So, again, if a young person inclines to extravagance, or to miserliness, or to carelessness, or to hasty speech, or to inconsiderate action, it is admitted by all that the inclination in such a case stands as a hindrance to successful progress, and that added endeavor will be needful for the overcoming of that hindrance.

But, on the other hand, if a boy inclines to spend his time reading, or drawing pictures, the thought of his parents is more likely to be that he ought to become a student or an artist. If he inclines to the use of tools, or to the examination of machinery, they are likely to take it as an indication of

his fitness for some mechanical or inventive pursuit. If it is to the enjoyment of music that he inclines, that is counted a ground of hope that he will become a musical composer or performer. If he inclines to endless disputings and arguings in the home circle, it is supposed that he would make a good lawyer. His inclination to write out little stories or moral reflections is looked upon as a fore-gleam of his power as an author, an editor, or a preacher. And so all along in the line of indicative tokens of possible success in life. Yet, as a rule, a young person's inclination in any direction is likely to be a hindrance, rather than a help, to success in that direction; because a man is less of a man for doing only what he inclines to do.

High attainment involves persistent struggle. Persistent struggle demands compacted character. Compacted character is secured only through pressure and resistance. No man can gain the compacted character which enables him to struggle persistently toward

high attainment, without a resistance of his personal inclination, and a pressure against unwelcome obstacles in his pathway. Inclination would carry a man in the direction of the swift-flowing current; but the brawny arm and the alert sense of the skilled boatman are acquired in the pulling of the oars in the up-stream course, against one's inclinations. No man has eminent success in any sphere without doing a great deal of work which he would be inclined to leave undone; without, in fact, resisting his inclinations, instead of following them.

It is so easy to follow one's inclinations, that a man is in danger of losing all the gain of struggle, with the consequent growth of manhood, in his favorite, but unfavoring, pursuit. He who always studies, or who always paints, in the direction of his inclinations, is not likely to be a successful student or a successful artist. He will lack that discipline of mind and that mastery of personal powers which come through the doing of what one ought to do, whether one inclines

to do it or not; and such a lack is fatal to success.

Ease of writing is rarely the natural possession of a successful editor. If he had had that, he might have relied on it to his injury. Exceptional facility of speech would commonly stand in the way of a man's being a first-class advocate or preacher, because of his making it a substitute for the means of real attainment in his profession. On the contrary, a firm purpose of success in the opposite direction from one's inclinations—in any line of endeavor—is in itself an earnest of some sure attainment, if not indeed of high success, in the direction of that purpose. And so far one's inclinations are made a help to progress through their resistance, when they would prove a hindrance if they were conformed to.

One's *inclination* is one thing; one's *preference* is quite another thing. An inclination is a matter of tendency; a preference is a matter of choice. A true man's inclination is often in one direction, while his preference



is in the opposite direction. A soldier coming under fire may be inclined to turn and run; but as a soldier his preference is to stand at his post, in spite of the risk. A loving watcher by a sick-bed may incline to sleep, and at the same time may prefer to keep awake. \* So in every sphere of life, the inclination may be against the dictates of wisdom and of duty; the preference ought always to be in accord with those dictates. What one inclines to is, indeed, a minor factor in one's proper preference for an occupation or a profession in life.

In making one's choice of a life-pursuit, the chief question for one to ask himself is not, What do I incline to? But it is, What ought I to prefer? As a basis of one's intelligent preference, three points are to be considered wisely: Where can I best please and honor my Master? Where can I make the most of myself, and attain to the highest development of a noble personal character? Where can I be of largest service to my fellows, in view of their interests for time and



for eternity? In answering these three questions, one's special *fitness*—actual or attainable fitness—ought to be taken into consideration. Ordinarily, it will be found, on a fair examination of the case by any child of God who sincerely desires to know and to do God's will, that the answer to all three questions will point in one direction, and that that direction is away from one's natural or acquired inclinations. But when one's *duty* is thus indicated, his deliberate preference ought to be in the line of that duty, in spite of the obstacle, or the hindrance, of his inclinations.

## VII.

### *RICHES AS A HINDRANCE TO SUCCESS.*

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It is often admitted as a theory, even though it be depreciated as a practical teaching, that riches are a hindrance rather than a help in the spiritual life, and in aspiring struggles heavenward. But it is not a common belief that riches are liable to prove a hindrance to high success in the life that now is, and in laudable endeavors to attain to a permanent position among the honored names of earth. Yet it is equally true of the life that is and of the life that is to come, that riches are commonly a hindrance, and are often an absolute barrier, to successful progress and to permanent high attainment. If only this truth were realized in its entirety, what a difference it would make in the popular estimate of riches and of their possession!

Concerning the bearing of riches on the spiritual life, the words of Jesus are explicit, unqualified, and wide-reaching. "Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." The Revised Version shows the force of this statement even more clearly than did the old translation. "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And when the disciples heard it, they were astonished exceedingly, saying, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them said to them—With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

There can be no escape from the conclusion that Jesus here affirmed that riches are a natural hindrance to spiritual progress, and that only by a special miracle, by an act of God in arresting the natural order of things, can one who has riches be brought in safety through the spiritual peril of riches; that while it is possible for God to accomplish

this fact, it is one of the hard things to do in the realm of the miraculous. Christian people generally do not act as if they really believed *this* truth unhesitatingly; but there are those who will admit its correctness just as it stands, who are not ready to admit the added truth that it is hard for a rich man to attain to a really desirable position in the kingdom of this world. Yet this truth is as true as the other.

Lord Bacon, who was a prince of modern worldly philosophers, and who never spoke merely from a spiritual plane in his treatment of practical themes of thought, says emphatically: "I cannot call riches better than the baggage of virtue. The Roman word is better, *impedimenta* [hindrances]; for as the baggage is to an army, so is riches to virtue: it cannot be spared, nor left behind, but it hindereth the march; yea, and the care of it sometimes loseth or disturbeth the victory." Then, in commenting on the suggestion that riches will enable men to purchase themselves successes, Bacon adds that "certainly great

riches have sold more men than they have bought out." And that which the great English philosopher here affirms as a general principle, is verified by the experiences of mankind in earlier and in later times. At the best, worldly riches are dragging hindrances to progress; and the successful march of life must be made in spite of these hindrances, and not because of them.

The more common thought in this matter is, that large wealth gives a man a great immediate advantage in position and in power in almost every sphere of life's activities; and that a lack of wealth is correspondingly to a man's immediate disadvantage almost everywhere: yet, as a matter of fact, the truth is quite the reverse of this popular impression. In order to test the truth at this point, it might be helpful to turn to some record of the world's great names, and to observe what proportion of those who attained to permanent eminence among men were either given their place for their wealth, or were materially aided in their struggle for

it by their wealth. Perhaps there is no fairer measure of the relative permanent eminence of men among men than the fact of their securing a mention in a standard cyclopedia or a biographical dictionary. And according to this measure, what are the facts in the case?

For example, there is the revised edition of Lippincott's Dictionary of Biography and Mythology, as edited by Dr. Joseph Thomas. It contains, say, forty thousand names, more or less, covering the great names of ancient and modern story, both historical and mythical; including living celebrities in all lands. These names are of men and women distinguished in every sphere of life: rulers, statesmen, heroes, travelers, financiers, manufacturers, merchants, inventors, reformers, writers, preachers, orators, artists, actors, philanthropists, scientists, scholars; even monstrosities, and criminals, and all others who for any cause are deemed worthy of exceptional note in the world's story. It would, perhaps, be a surprise to those who deem

wealth a foremost agency in securing eminence among men, to ascertain how few in all that record are named because of their great wealth, or because of that which their wealth obtained for them. From Midas and Cræsus down to the Rothschilds and Astors, the men of wealth who are there named because of their wealth are a pitiably small array; and the space which is devoted to them, even when they have a place there, bears no comparison with the space devoted to authors, or preachers, or discoverers, or inventors, or philanthropists, or to helpers of their fellows in any other way.

All the stories combined of all the men who were eminent merely for their wealth, in that entire thesaurus of biography, occupy no such space as that which is given to one man like Martin Luther, or William Shakespeare, or Immanuel Kant, or Jonathan Edwards, or Benjamin Franklin, or Abraham Lincoln, or many another who started in poverty and made his way up in the world without the aid of riches. The



Rothschilds and the Astors together, in all their generations, are there only given as many lines as Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. Cornelius Vanderbilt has less space than David Livingstone the missionary, or than even Paganini the fiddler. William H. Vanderbilt is not even mentioned. A. T. Stewart's space does not equal that of Lemuel Haynes, the colored preacher; and it barely comes up to that of Daniel Lambert, the fat giant.

Even where the wealth was employed in well-doing, the prominence of the money-giver seems to justify no such extended mention as that which is accorded to thinkers and scientists and reformers. Thus Stephen Girard, and George Peabody, and Sir Moses Montefiore, put together, do not have the space which is occupied by John Wesley, or by Nathaniel Hawthorne, or by Michael Faraday. For, after all, the most famous instructor in a college is likely to have a popular eminence above that of the man who merely endowed the college; and he who

writes a great book which finds its place in a public library will be more widely honored than he who founded that library.

The money value is, in fact, always the lowest measure of permanent renown. And among the many living men of prominence noted in this collection of notabilities, not one of, say, the ten richest men in the United States at the time of its issue, receives even a passing mention among the celebrities of the reputed "land of the almighty dollar;" not one of them is named either for his possessions or for his performances; not one of them has won a place there by what he has, by what he is, or by what he has done or is doing. All of them have so far utterly failed of success in securing eminence in or through their pre-eminence as capitalists. Yet no other class of foremost men is so ignored; nor would it be likely to be.

This selection of names for prominence in a thesaurus of biography like Dr. Thomas's, and the relative space given to them severally, is not a matter of personal preference;

but it is, as far as it can be, a record of the world's verdict on the claims of the individuals to the permanent interest of their fellows generally. If, indeed, any intelligent observer of the course of events were to look around him now, and to say who of those whom he sees in the struggle of active life were to have a place in a permanent record like this, how rarely would he point to a man of great wealth as one who was likely to be thus honored! All the history of the race, and all the philosophy of life and of living, go to show that wealth neither purchases permanent fame, nor is ordinarily a means of its securing.

Worldly fame is not the highest and noblest ambition in life; and no man ought to live for the purpose of securing a place for his name in a biographical dictionary. But, in view of the fact that so many are striving for wealth, or value wealth when it is in their possession, because of their belief that large wealth secures eminence and power, it is well to recognize and to face the fact that wealth

does not bring the very result which is supposed to be its natural outcome.

There are, indeed, many men of wealth who would give all their present and prospective possessions for the purchase of such a niche in the temple of fame as many a poor man has before now obtained. They would agree with the poet who says on this point:

“Can all the wreaths that crown his head  
Compensate now to Homer dead  
The living Homer's want of bread?  
Yet who would not a beggar be  
To be as much renowned as he?  
I would in sooth 'twere offered me.”

And although these men of wealth can make no such purchase as this, there may be a gain in setting before others who have as yet only started out in life, the unmistakable fact that if it is permanent honor among men that they desire, they will find riches more likely to be a hindrance than a help in their pursuit. They must win fame, if they win it at all, without wealth, or in spite of it, not directly because of wealth.

The possession of wealth by a young man deprives him of the spur of necessity as a stimulus to that persistent and untiring endeavor which is a requisite of the highest success in any line of business, or in any profession of life. If he makes progress in spite of his wealth, it is through the exercise of qualities which are rare among men; and at the best he is at more or less of a disadvantage in comparison with those who are neither hampered nor tempted as he is. In almost every direction it will be found that those who are now foremost in their business or profession are those who were not encumbered with riches to begin with; and, on the other hand, it will appear that many who started in the same direction with the consciousness of riches at their disposal were speedily distanced in the race by their necessity-impelled competitors.

If, therefore, a young man finds himself without riches, present or prospective, let him thank God for this advantage in his life-struggle; and let him push ahead in the line

of a high purpose in noble doing. He may yet do a great work in the world, and be permanently honored by the world because of his well-doing. If, on the other hand, a young man finds himself in the possession, present or prospective, of worldly wealth, let him realize that he is at a decided disadvantage in his life-struggle; and that unless he is a good deal more of a man than his moneyless competitors, he is likely to seem a good deal less of a man in the world's ultimate esteeming. But let him not despair of success on account of this hindrance of his riches; for—"with God all things are possible."

## VIII.

### IS SUCCESS A WORTHY AIM.

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In the popular mind, *success* stands over against *failure*; the one being understood as the converse of the other. And as no man deliberately aims at failure, most men aim at success. But the question is a fair one, Is success a worthy aim? Is a desire for success as success commendable and praiseworthy?

And to begin with, in considering this inquiry, it is well to ask, What is success? The word "success" means, primarily, "to take another's place." It is from *sub* and *cedo*, "to go in place of;" more literally, "to go *under*" another, to come up in his stead. This primitive meaning of the word is retained in the word "successor," as applied to one who comes into office, or position, or business, after another who has left it. The



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struggle of life being so largely one of competition, it is not to be wondered at that men come to look at all effort for position as a strife between one and the many; the victor pushing aside his fellows, and obtaining that which they had held, or which they had sought. And so attainment has come to be practically deemed synonymous with success.

“Success” in its primitive meaning is another term for that condition of things which modern scientists call “the survival of the fittest.” A vessel is sinking in mid-ocean; there is a scramble for the boats; strong men and weak women and children are in competition for the few places in those boats; the strong men succeed, the weak women and children fail. A party of explorers are on an ice-locked headland waiting for expected rescue; the supply of food is insufficient for all; those who are in fuller health take its larger share, causing the others to starve by degrees; the former succeed, the latter fail. A bank watchman

is guarding his trust; a burglar grapples with and overpowers him; the burglar succeeds in his effort to get at the bank vault, the watchman fails in his endeavor to guard that vault. These are extreme cases, it is true; but they illustrate the primitive meaning of the term "success."

Historically it is obvious, that, as a rule, men came to have prominence in their success through overpowering, or undermining, or displacing, their opponents and competitors. This was the case in the struggles for empire, in the contests of personal valor, in the strife for wealth. It was by the enforced failure of many that one would succeed; and whatever tended to or promoted failure on the one part, in the same measure tended to or promoted success on the other part. The world's story of men's success is, therefore, largely a story of crime and craft and heartless self-seeking. Success of *that* sort is surely not a worthy aim for any person.

As the world has grown better, public sentiment is less ready than formerly to give

open approval to success which is clearly based on crime. But even at the present day the primitive elements of success are not wholly eliminated from all those attainings and obtainings which enter into the successes which command popular attention, and which excite personal envy. Political success is often secured, and is still oftener sought, by means which elevate the unworthy man into the place of a deserving one.

Many a successful capitalist has built up his colossal fortune on the failure of railroad corporations which he has wrecked, or of estates which he has plundered, or of dealers whom he has "cornered," or of families ruined by the liquors, or the lottery tickets, or the nostrums which he has vended. The very basis of hope for success in many a line of business is the breaking down of others in the fields of its competition. Who will claim that such success is worthy of any true man's aim?

He who strives to be ahead of others may, from one cause or another, have the success

for which he is anxious, even though his efforts are less deserving than are those of his competitors. An unfortunate slip on their part, or an unfair advantage on his, may put those competitors behind him, while neither his own attainment nor theirs is so great as it might be. In a similar struggle for the pre-eminence, the same man might fail of success, while doing better than in the other instance; he failing not because of his own lack, but because of the yet better doing of a competitor. Who can say that success through another's failure is so noble an aim as is high achievement—even in failure through another's higher achieving?

Jacob is the typical man of success. His very name means Succeeder, or Supplanter. His craft and shrewdness enabled him to succeed in every contest with brother and father and uncle. But there came a time when Jacob was more desirous of a blessing than of success in his personal conflict; and then it was that he won a better name than Jacob. He was more of a man in his one

failure than in his every success. John the Baptist had a higher aim than success. He wanted to fill his own place faithfully, and he was ready to rejoice that another was to have a higher place than himself. And in no way did John the Baptist more clearly evidence that there had not been born of woman a greater man than he, than in those words of his generous testimony to Him by whom he was to be transcended: "He that cometh after me is preferred before me. . . . He must increase, but I must decrease."

Any success which pivots on another's failure lacks the elements of a noble purpose. It *is* worthy of a man's best strivings to do as well as it is possible for him to do, and to rise as high as it is possible for him to rise, whether he be before or behind his fellows. It is *not* worthy of a true man to strive merely to transcend another, whether that other's mark and compass be high or low. Nor is it worthy of any man to reach out, graspingly, after that which belongs to another. Yet the world's ordinary measure

of success, now as formerly, is met in a man's distancing of those who compete with him, or in his displacing of one who before had the first position. And herein it is that success, according to the world's standard, cannot be satisfying to a good man and a true.

It is true, as the worldly-minded maxim has it, that "nothing succeeds like success." And this is by no means a saying of modern origin; for Seneca said, at the beginning of our Christian era, "Success makes some crimes honorable;" and Tacitus, a little later, declared, "There is no room for hesitation in any enterprise which can only be justified by success." But it is also true, whatever the world has thought of it or may think of it, that faithfulness is better than success; that the right filling of one's own place in life, however humble and inconspicuous that place may be, is a worthier aim for any man than the occupying of another's place.

The "championship" and the "prize" are the world's approval of success; for these



awards show that all competitors have been distanced by the successful one. "Well done, good and faithful servant," is the Lord's commendation to every one who has done his best with his talents, even though he has gained by them only other two, where his fellow has gained five. The Lord's approval is a worthier aim than the world's approval, in any sphere of life.



## IX.

### *THE GAIN OF A CONTRACTED SPHERE.*

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Practical power in this world is largely dependent on the limitations of the sphere in which that power is exercised. In the realms of physics and of morals, as in the realm of logic, the intension of a force is increased as its extension is diminished; hence the closer the contractions of our personal sphere in life, the more potent may be our influence within and beyond that sphere.

A small quantity of gunpowder ignited in an extensive open field will spend itself in a powerless flash. The same gunpowder shut within the contractions of a gun-chamber would drive a solid shot far beyond the boundaries of that field, with the possibility of doing execution that shall decide a

battle or a campaign, and perhaps make a turning-point in the world's history. House-building is for the very purpose of contracting the limits of a home, so that there can be warmth there in winter, and cool air in summer, and taste and convenience and comfort at all times. The garments which we wear by day, and the bed-clothing which covers us at night, do not in themselves give to us any warmth; they simply contract and limit the sphere within which the warmth of our own blood can be kept from dissipating its life-sustaining power. And so, in all things, the walls, the bounds, the limits, are in a sense both the measure and the source of power.

No man ever grows so great as to fill immensity. He whose sphere of control and of influence is vastest, is still dependent on the limitations of that sphere, and on his ability to occupy it fully. Be he tsar or kaiser, king, governor, shaykh, or chief, he is potent because he represents, or rules, not all humanity alike, but a limited portion of the human family; and just so soon as the limi-

tations of his sphere are beyond the limitations of his ability, all the ability he has, however much it be, is useless for that sphere; and so he is a failure, not because he had no power, but because his sphere was not sufficiently contracted to make his power available. Many a military commander who has proved himself a man of rare power within certain limitations of command, has utterly wrecked his reputation by being assigned to a larger sphere than he could fully fill as a commander. It is the same in all lines of business and of enterprise, and of activity generally. A man is dependent for his practical efficiency on the due limitations of his sphere; and he owes quite as much to the boundaries which shut him in, as to the ability and the energy which he exercises within those boundaries.

He who preaches or who teaches would labor without hope if there were no contracting limits to his sphere of effort. To stand on the highest mountain-top and cry aloud to the whole world, would be a mere waste

of strength and breath. The preacher depends on the walls of the room in which he proclaims the gospel invitation, to bring that invitation back on the ears of his hearers, where otherwise it would be dissipated in the air beyond. Even if he stands at the street corners to deliver his message, he looks to the limits of the little knot of people who gather about him while he preaches, as forming and fixing his sphere of influence for the immediate hour.

The teacher, again, must have his school-room and his class, in order to his imparting instruction effectively. His best exhibit of attainments would be as flashing powder in the open field, were it not for the gun-chamber boundaries which give it force and directness within and from its class-room limitations. And so in all the sphere of mental and moral endeavor, the encircling and contracting limits of power, rather than the outgoing reaches of power, are the causes of good to the world, and the occasions of chief rejoicing to the worker.

It is in and through the contracted sphere of home life, and because of the very contractions of that sphere, that woman is more potent in the world's forces than man can be. It is because she is wife, or because she is mother, or because she is sister, or because she is daughter, and that her personal influence and her personal efforts are intensified within the contractions of that personal relation, that she shapes and directs the spirit and thoughts and purposes and endeavors of her husband, or her son, or her brother, or her father, in a wider sphere than she herself could directly fill, and which but for her would never have been filled by him. Had her own sphere been larger, her power would have been less,—if indeed it had been anything at all.

He who has the reputation of doing most for others is very often he who is simply responsive to the inspirations and the incitements of some loved friend, or other self, who is in the contracted sphere of personal influence which is back of his best endeavors.

If that sphere were not so contracted, its influence could not be thus intensified as a force for his uplifting and on-speeding. The solid iron of his nature would remain inert and useless, but for the propulsion given to it by the carbo-nitrate in that inner chamber of generated enthusiasm, from which he makes his appearance in a show of power. And in the day of great disclosure the sources of good to the world will be shown as back of most that the world has credited with power. .

No one of us can know surely the limitations which are essential to his effective working in his sphere. But God knows them exactly, and he never fails to assign them wisely. Not only does God give to one man five talents, to another two, and to another one, "to each according to his several ability," but he gives to one man a five-talent sphere, to another a two-talent sphere, and to another a one-talent sphere; "to each according to his several ability."



## X.

### *PROGRESS THROUGH STRUGGLE.*

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It is a good thing for a young man, or for an old one, to have a great deal to contend with. Every man longs to make progress as long as he lives, and as a matter of fact there is no real progress in this life except through struggle.

Unless there were a hammer to swing and an anvil to strike, the blacksmith would never have the brawny arm which marks his power. If there were no hills to climb and no storms to face, the sturdy mountaineer would show no such superior vigor as makes him another being from the ease-loving dweller in the vine-embowered valley.. It is not the uniform and the parade which bring out the courage, and develop the highest manhood, of the enlisted soldier; but it is the march, the privation, and the battle, which transform him



into the bronzed and ennobled veteran. Not the receiving of riches by inheritance, but the securing of them by unintermitted struggle, gives a capitalist the ability to be a leader in the world of wealth. It is rather the hindrances to knowledge than the helps to them, that give the scholar his final pre-eminence in the field of letters. And the man of character is always the man who has made progress through struggle, who has had a great deal to contend with, and has contended successfully.

It is very natural for us to long for ease; but it is very well for us that we do not have ease. Ease is a good thing to look forward to; but we ought to thank God that there are so many streams to be crossed, and thickets to be pressed through, and mountains to be clambered over, before the place of ease can possibly be reached by us. It is really a cause for rejoicing, rather than for regret, that our children take so much of our time just now, that our housekeeping cares are so absorbing, that we have so much

trouble with the servants, that our business interests are so perplexing, that our personal health is so precarious, and that one or another of the family is always getting sick. It would be worse for us, rather than better, if we did not have quite so many difficulties in the way of carrying on our school, or our farm, or our factory, or our newspaper, or our parish.

The truth is we should not do so well in the very work where we now have these troubles, if we were without these troubles. If a minister, for example, seeks a new charge because he thinks that he can thereby get more time for reading and study, and for religious visiting, by using his old sermons without having to write new ones, it is commonly found that he gives no more time either to study or to visiting than before, and that he simply ceases to grow in intellect or in spirituality. By the removal of the demand for his constant struggle to keep up with his work, there has been an interruption of his progress in his work, and a lessening of his power to work. And

it is not the housekeeper, nor the teacher, nor the business man, who has least to contend with, who fills his or her place best, or who gets on most successfully. Can you say that it is?

Looking at this side of the truth, what have you most reason to be grateful for, when you awake in the morning, and think of the duties before you for the day? Just this, that you have so much to contend with; that there are so many difficulties in your way; that you are beset before and behind and on either hand, and that you cannot move in any direction without a struggle. Even your very pains and aches ought to be a comfort to you. And what a satisfaction there may be in the thought of your proximity to that stupid servant, and that disagreeable neighbor, and that unfair business rival! Really, there are obstacles enough in your path to be very encouraging. What cause you have for thankfulness!

In the formation of personal character, even more than in material interests and in

things external to one's self, progress is made only through struggle. It is what one has to contend with, rather than what is favoring and helpful, that gives the opportunity of soul growth. When we see one who commands respect and admiration by the character in his very look and bearing, we are sure that that character represents struggle and endurance—

“As if the man had fixed his face,  
In many a solitary place,  
Against the wind and open sky.”

There is, in fact, no such admirableness in any human countenance as that which shows the result of successful struggle in the daily conflicts of life and in the exceptional battles of great emergencies. The plainest face acquires attractiveness through the signs of triumph over opposing forces of evil, within and without; while the most regular features lack winsomeness of expression if they lack the evidences of combat for the mastery over that which would hinder the soul's progress.

Only, indeed, as a face marks attainment in character through struggle, does a face mark any high attainment in character.

It is not pleasant to face this truth concerning the mode of true progress in life; but it is pleasant to face the fact of the results of this mode of progress. He who has the combat before him must fix his thought on the issue of that combat rather than on the combat itself. This is the way in all of earth's conflicts. The bravest soldier shrinks from battle before he enters it; but when it is upon him, all his energies are aroused to fight it through to the end; and he knows, when that battle is over with, that he is more of a man than he could have been without the struggle it involved to him. So it is that we are to pray continually, "Lead us not into temptation"—or trial; for trial and temptation are synonymous: and, at the same time, that we are to "count it all joy" when we "fall into divers temptations"—into many and strange trials which are upon us without our choice—"knowing this, that the proving of our faith

worketh patience,"—or endurance; and that by the struggles and endurances of that trial we can be advanced in personal character.

It is hard to be tempted; hard to be compelled to struggle day by day with new temptations, and, what is still worse, with old ones that seem never to lose their power or their persistency; it is hard to be sometimes worsted in the struggle—for it is a rare campaign that knows never a temporary disaster or check to the soldiers who will have final victory;

"But noble souls, through dust and heat,  
Rise from disaster and defeat  
The stronger.  
And conscious still of the divine  
Within them, lie on earth supine  
No longer."

For our temptations, and our struggles with them, we have reason to be grateful to God. The very things that seem at this hour to be the great barriers to our progress in the Christian life are designed of God as means to our Christian progress. If they were



removed, we should lose the struggle with them; and losing that we should lose the victory over them, with its spiritual uplifting to ourselves. Those barriers are, under God, a source of our hope for a higher and truer Christian manhood and womanhood. Let us rejoice in them now, because we shall rejoice over them by and by.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: but insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, rejoice that at the revelation of his glory also, ye [as conquerors through his grace over this trial] may rejoice with exceeding joy.”



## XI.

### *ATTAINMENT THROUGH CATASTROPHE.*

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There are beautiful teachings of spiritual truths brought out, or rather suggested, by many of the discoveries of modern science. Whatever may be thought of the *theories* of materialistic naturalists concerning the world's beginning and progress, the *facts* which are disclosed through the studies of such men, as well as through those of reverent Christian scientists, are worthy of the close attention of every lover of God and of his works. God's writings, in the book of nature and in the book of revelation, commend themselves to all who would know the mind of God.

The same great truths and the same great laws run alike through the kingdoms of nature and of grace, and the more we know

of the lower sphere the better fitted we are to understand and to appreciate the lessons of the higher. Even while some of the plausible scientific hypotheses are yet unproved, there is a value in them from their correspondence with the recognized truths of spiritual life and progress. This is true, for example, of Professor Darwin's view of the origin of species in "the survival of the fittest;" and again of Professor Huxley's hypothesis, that by successive evolutions the nobler and the better orders of life came up from the inferior. How many illustrations of both these processes of formation and progress are found in the moral world, in accordance with the teachings of the Scriptures and the observations of our experience!

Yet another theory that is broached in the realm of science, has its bearing, still more obviously, by way of illustration, on the spiritual life. This theory is what Mr. Clarence King, the venturesome and enthusiastic Pacific slope explorer, has called "Catastrophism and the Evolution of Environ-

ment." His idea—which although not new is newly applied by him—is, that in the development of the higher from the lower orders of animal life, each successive stage of progress was brought about by some great catastrophe of nature, with a consequent new environment, or new surroundings, for the creatures which survived the shock.

Thus in the case of the fossil horses of this continent, about which so much is said by Professor Huxley, Mr. King is confident, from his studies in the geological strata of the country from which the bones in question came, that "between each two successive stages of the horse there was a catastrophe which seriously altered the climate and configuration of the whole region in which these animals lived." And the scientist's conclusion is "that He who brought to bear that mysterious energy we call life upon primeval matter, bestowed at the same time a power of development by change, arranging that the interaction of energy and matter which make up environment should, from time to

time, burst in upon the current of life, and sweep it onward and upward to ever higher and better manifestations. Moments of great catastrophe, thus translated into the language of life, become moments of creation, when out of plastic organisms something newer and nobler is called into being."

How strikingly this hypothesis illustrates many of the processes of spiritual progress! By divine ordering, the interaction of circumstances and associations which make up a soul's environment burst in upon the current of spiritual life, and sweep it onward and upward to ever higher and better manifestations. Moments of great catastrophe thus become moments of creation, when out of plastic natures, under the influence of grace, a nature newer and nobler is called into being and play.

A catastrophe befalls a quiet and lovely home, by which the husband and father is taken suddenly away. The elder son is but a bright and thoughtless boy. At once, however, he is in a new environment. There is no

one for him to look up to and to lean upon. His mother and younger sisters are reaching out to him for support. He is changed as it were in an hour. New responsibilities press upon him; his struggle to bear up under them develops and strengthens his every faculty. His step is firmer; his bearing is more erect; his face already shows the lines of thought and care and unselfish endurance for others. Through that catastrophe he has been raised from the plane of a careless, dependent youth to the sphere of a noble and holy manhood.

Or, it is the young wife with the helpless babe, who seems crushed under the catastrophe which deprives her of a loving husband's presence and care. How different a world she lives in now! How changed is her environment! And how she changes with her change of condition! How much less she cares for the attractions of the world about her! How her thoughts center on the little one left to her, and on the home where the family shall be reunited! Through grace

her unspeakable sorrow transfigures her very face and form, until she seems so spiritualized and refined by sanctified suffering that her every look becomes an inspiration and a benediction to all who watch her. She is of a higher order of being than before that catastrophe with its change of her environment.

The young man engaged in his studies is startled by the intelligence that his father is a bankrupt, and that he must abandon his plans for a college course, and go out at once to earn his bread by daily toil. The man of wealth finds his property swept away through unfortunate investments, and is compelled to begin again in poverty after long years of ease and indulgence. He who has trusted another without doubt or hesitation finds in a sad hour that he has been betrayed by one whom he loved as his own soul. It may be fire or flood or pestilence which changes the whole face and circumstances of a community, and brings through that catastrophe a new environment to all whose home is there. There



are a thousand ways in which the shock may come. Coming in any way, its influence is manifest in the uplifted characters and the ennobled lives of all who are truly profited thereby. Without such a catastrophe,—some great bereavement, or disappointment, or loss of possessions, or change of condition and circumstances,—there can never be that great and rapid transformation by which a soul is swept onward and upward at once into a loftier realm of spiritual being. There is no other way “into the kingdom of God,” than “through much tribulation,” and tribulation often involves catastrophe with its change of the soul’s environment.

It is at last by the great catastrophe that we call “death,” that our spiritual natures are brought into an environment which will enable them to exercise their best and highest powers to an extent before impossible. And so it is that the material world in which we live moves on unceasingly toward that greatest of all catastrophes, “by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dis-



solved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;" when, "according to His promise, we look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"—because perfect righteousness is consistent with that new environment.

## XII.

### *PERILS OF PROMOTION.*

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He who has no desire for promotion in or beyond his present field of service, lacks an important stimulus to best endeavor in the sphere of his present service. Yet promotion is almost sure to bring an increase of perils, even greater than its increase of honors and of opportunities. In order to do well where he is, a man must be inspired by the hope of a higher station than he now occupies. Yet a man's doing well where he is, does not prove that he would do equally well in a place above this one; and the moment of his transfer from a lower plane to a higher one is always a critical moment in his life of struggle for achievement.

Well-doing in any sphere involves the possession and exercise of fine qualities; and he who has qualities which would fit

him for well-doing in a high sphere is sure to show those qualities in his well-doing in a lower sphere. But the lower the sphere, the smaller the measure of qualities necessary for success in that sphere; hence he who is fully competent to meet the measure there, may lack competency for the larger measure beyond and above. Because the lower sphere requires a smaller measure of ability than the higher one, it is easier to find a man for the one than for the other; and on this account there is a constant lack of, and a consequent call for, well-doers in the higher spheres of service of every sort.

Therefore it is that a man who does exceptionally well in a lower place is pretty sure to be sought for in a higher one. But while competency for a higher place is certain to manifest itself in competency for a lower one, competency for a lower place does not insure competency for a higher one; and when a man is promoted from the one to the other, his promotion may simply disclose the limitation of his power, and prove

the means of his failure. And so it is that there is always peculiar peril to a man in the time of his promotion and advancement.

In every higher sphere of effort there is need of new qualities in order to its filling. It is not enough that there be a larger measure of the qualities before called into exercise, but there must be qualities which were not required for success in a lower sphere. The question comes, therefore, at every step of promotion, "Has the promoted one the added qualities which, together with those which he has already displayed, will meet the demands of his new position?" It may be, for instance, that a man has shown rare fidelity and carefulness and skill in a position of personal trust and responsibility, and in consequence he is promoted to a position over others. His good qualities, as already evidenced, will be quite as important in his new sphere as in his old one; but in addition to these he must have power to oversee others, and to direct them wisely. Without this added power he is a failure in

his new position, and his promotion has put him where he cannot be a well-doer.

Thus it is that it is sometimes said of a man, "He is a good lieutenant, but a poor captain." He can do well so long as he has another to tell him what to do, but he cannot plan for himself. Even if he has the planning power of a captain, he may not have the power to oversee all that a colonel would have to be responsible for. And so all the way up in the line of military promotion. There was a remarkable illustration of this in our Civil War, where one of the most successful commanders of a division was incompetent to the command of an army, because he lacked those qualities which were essential to the oversight and wise use of a large number of divisions. In a battle, he was pretty sure to be interested chiefly in the portion of the field immediately before him, to the forgetfulness of its equally important portions elsewhere.

Whatever the sphere of endeavor, the perils of promotion are much the same.

In the counting-room, the shop, or the factory, an advance to a higher grade imperils the standing of him who is promoted. The good student may make a poor teacher; the eminent lawyer may lose his reputation for ability through his elevation to the bench; the first-class business man may wreck his prospects by taking a seat in Congress. A clergyman, who is doing an excellent work in the small parish for which he is suited, may prove a failure in a large city pastorate to which he has been called because of his success in the smaller field. Every step of promotion is a step into surroundings of new peril, and may prove a step beyond the limits of usefulness to him who takes it.

One cause of peril to him who is promoted is his forgetfulness of the fact that he owes his promotion to no disclosed fitness for his new sphere, but wholly to his fitness for the sphere he has left. Because a man has done well in one place, he has, it is true, reason to think that he could continue to do well in *that* place; but he has therein no sufficient

ground for supposing that he would do well in *another* place, which demands the exercise of qualities not yet evidenced by him. Others, indeed, may be willing to take the risk of trying him in the new place; but their risk is not so great as his in his transfer.

Many a man, however, loses sight of this truth as he accepts a proffered promotion; and he starts out in his new sphere with the thought in his mind that he owes his promotion to a fitness for it already evidenced, whereas all his former achievements are in no sense a proof that his failure here will not be as marked as were his successes there. He does not realize that his past is no guarantee of his future, and that, if he does well now, it must be by doing that which he has never done before. He is not only on trial anew, but he is on trial with the disadvantage of having acquired a reputation in another field, which he may be totally incapable of maintaining in this one.

Confidence in one's powers is essential to one's best use of his powers; but no man



ought to have undue confidence in powers which he has never exercised. And just here it is that the man who is most likely to fail through promotion is least likely to be timid in the acceptance of promotion. He has such confidence in powers which he knows he possesses, that he permits his confidence to include powers which he takes it for granted that he has, simply because he sees that he needs them. And he who, in such a case, thinks that he is sure to stand, is the man who is in greatest danger of falling. One's honest questioning of his ability to succeed in a new field which opens before him by promotion, is essential to one's fair prospect of success in that new field. One's unhesitating confidence at such a time in his ability for an untried sphere, is a confidence based on his supposed possession of other powers than those now in demand; and it is likely to fail him when he finds its basis to be a false one.

Entering a new field with a consciousness of its peculiar perils to him, a man may

strive so earnestly and determinedly for the meeting of its requirements, that his filling of it shall be even more conspicuously successful than was his filling of the place below it. In this way it is that promotion is a gain to a man, not because it is without its perils to him, but because by a sense of its perils he is aroused to new and larger endeavors for their overcoming.

In other words, the man who thinks there is no risk to him in his promotion, is likely to be a failure through his promotion; whereas the man who realizes the perils of promotion may be advantaged by every step he takes in the line of promotion. If he knows that he is not yet fitted for his new place, he may become so. If he thinks he is already fitted for it, he never will be. His only safety, in fact, lies in his sense of his danger.

### XIII.

#### *BUILDING A HOME FOR THE SOUL.*

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Many years ago, the writer of these words was riding with a gentleman through the woods, among the hills of New England. It was just at the close of an autumn day. The sound of a falling ax, in its quick, sharp blows, was heard in the distance with growing distinctness. Presently, at a turn of the road, an old man was seen, at the work of felling trees. The gentleman stopped his horse, and called the wood-cutter by name. The latter turned with a hasty movement, as if impatient of delay, and looked to see what was wanted. The gentleman told of a job of work to be done on his own premises, in the village below, and asked if the woodman could come and attend to it. "No," was the prompt and earnest response. "No; I'm

building me a house to live in now; and I mustn't do anything else till that's done. I'm an old man; and I've got no home. I've only a little while longer to live; and I must get me a house ready before I die. I'd like to do the job for you, I'd like to earn the money. But I must build me my house before it's too late." And the old man turned impulsively to his wood-cutting again. As the travelers drove on, the sounds of his falling ax were in their ears, until its quick, sharp blows grew fainter and fainter in the distance, as the evening closed in upon them.

Many a time since then the thought has come back of that old man in his homelessness, longing to build himself a house before he should die. As he stood there with bared head, the last rays of the sunlight, as they streamed through the open woods, falling on his silvered hair; his worn face and keen eyes beaming with intensity of feeling and purpose; his trusty ax held with nervous grasp as he stayed its blows at the moment of unwelcome interruption; speaking out, as if in

a struggle between determination and despair: "I'm an old man, and I've got no home; I've only a little while longer to live; and I must get me a house ready before I die,"—that anxious woodman was a type of homeless souls everywhere; and he ought to be an example as well as a type. None of us can have satisfactory homes for our souls except as we build them:

"Our to-days and yesterdays  
Are the blocks with which we build."

As, in one sense, our bodies—which are given to us without our choice—are the temporary home of our souls; so, in another and wider sense, our characters, and our affiliations, and our heart possessions—which we are privileged to choose or to construct for ourselves—are to be the permanent home of our souls. It is in view of this truth that the Apostle counsels, "Let all things be done unto edifying,"—edifying being simply another term for house-building; it may be building for others, or it may be building for

one's self; and that again he gives warning to those, even, who are building on the right foundation: "Let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon."

In building a material structure to live in, we have three things in mind: appearance, comfort, stability. We want the house without and within to be pleasing to the eye—to our eye, and to the eyes of others—therefore in its form and adorning and furnishing we need to be guided by a correct and a refined taste. So it ought to be in the building of a home for the soul. It is right to seek an attractive character, pleasing manners, and winsome ways. He who disregards appearances—who does not care how he may seem to others, and who has no preferences of mere taste, in thought and speech and action—is a poor builder, and is sure of a shabby home for his soul. It is a duty to have one's soul-home so full of loveliness that all who see it will admire. Its gathered treasures and rare adornments should show through the windows. Whatever the face may lack of origi-



nal grace of feature, it ought so to glow with the light of kindness and sympathy as to appear beautiful to all. Manners and speech should so please, and conduct should so command approval, that all who are lookers on will be glad that that soul-building has been erected near them, even though it is very unlike their own. To secure such attractiveness of character and conduct the builder must cultivate his own taste in these directions. He must seek companionship with those who have similar tastes, or higher ones; and he must zealously strive to conform himself to the image of Him who alone is "altogether lovely."

But what is attractive appearance in an earthly home, if there be no comfort there? Of what use is all the adornment that pleases the eye, if no want of body, or craving of mind, or longing of the soul, is met in any room or its furnishing? In the soul-dwelling, as in every material home, there must be the means of light and warmth and ventilation. There must be appliances for the



preparation of food, for the opportunities of study and work, and for the securing of rest. There must be rooms for others also; for those who are loved, and for those who serve. No soul-home can be a place of comfort unless it is larger than enough for one person. There must be noble thoughts, and holy purposes, and worthy endeavors, and high and pure imaginings, and delightful memories, and sacred affections, and unselfish friendships, as the furnishings of any house which gives comfort to the soul whose dwelling it is. And there must be the pillows of a good conscience, and the couch of that peace which is given only to those who put their trust in the Saviour of sinners, if comfort be possible there by day and by night.

Such a comfortable home for the soul as this does not come to us by earthly inheritance. Nor is it found in the market for sale or to rent. It must be built by him who would have it; built slowly stone by stone, and furnished by degrees through the toils and self-denials of those who appreciate the

value of all these possessions, and are willing to labor and to wait for them.

“As in a building  
Stone rests on stone, and wanting the foundation  
All would be wanting, so in human life  
Each action rests on the foregoing event,  
That made it possible, but is forgotten  
And buried in the earth.”

He who yet lacks a home of comfort for his soul, has only himself to reproach for his homelessness, or for the cheerlessness of the home he has reared, but not duly furnished. Nor is it yet too late for him to seek this furnishing of that home. “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love,”—of love for Christ, or of love for those who are given to us by God’s blessing,—let us secure to ourselves as a permanent furnishing of the home of our souls, that “comfort wherewith we are comforted of God.”

Yet a home may be attractive in appearance, and may seem filled with all helps to comfort, while it lacks the stability which

shall secure it permanence. Unless the home of the soul is to endure, the time and strength and treasure expended in its uprearing and furnishing have been a vain outlay. The testing time will surely come. "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." This final fire test is not of the foundation alone; "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;" but it is the test of the building upreared as a soul-home, on that foundation. It is the test of the Christian's pursued studies, and indulged tastes, and chosen affections, and prosecuted activities. It is the test of his memories and ideals and friendships and devotions. It is the trying of his gathered treasures in the furnace that spares nothing but the refined gold.

Resting on the one sure foundation, "if any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward"—the reward of a home with its stability, its com-

forts, and its adornings, secured to him and to his forevermore. "Out of the common stones of your daily work," says Theodore Parker, "you may build yourself a temple which shall shelter your head from all harm, and bring down on you the inspiration of God." Therefore it is that the Apostle urges that not even a word be spoken by any Christian believer, in ordinary social intercourse, "but such as is good for edifying"—good for house-building for the soul.

Every soul has its place of sojourn even if it has not yet a home; its tabernacle before its finished temple. And so long as the life of probation continues, there is yet time for the building of a permanent home for the soul, as an improvement on its earlier resting-places. But "the night cometh when no man can work," therefore it is that he who would have a fitting abode for his soul should hasten to prepare one that is worthy of its inhabitant. This thought it is that Dr. Holmes finds in the lesson of the "chambered nautilus," vacating successively its temporary

dwelling-chambers, in order to make progress in its pearly temple-building:

“ Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
     As the swift seasons roll!  
     Leave thy low vaulted past!  
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
     Till thou at length art free,  
 Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unrest-  
     ing sea!”

#### XIV.

### *CONSECRATION THE PRICE OF COMFORT.*

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The only way of gaining Christian comfort is through Christian consecration. He who would have rest in Christ must be unreservedly in the service of Christ. Christ is never the truest helper until he is recognized as a master. The failure to perceive this truth is the cause of much vain seeking after rest and comfort and peace.

“Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden,” says Jesus, “and I will give you rest.” How the multitudes would flock at that call to share the benefits of that promise, if there were no qualifying clause to its provisions! All have their burdens. All want rest. All would turn to Jesus to tell him of their troubles and to ask his help, if nothing more were required of them than

this. But he adds, as showing the method of obtaining the desired blessing, "Take my yoke upon you,"—assume the livery of my service,—“and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Ah! that puts another face on the matter. Everybody would be glad to have Christ as a servant; but not everybody wants to be a servant of Christ. Christ is a servant. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. But his highest service is to those who count themselves his servants. His choicest ministry is to those whose greatest joy is found in doing anything for him. This is but one among many of the Christian paradoxes. Contradictory as it seems, it is in accordance with the principle which underlies all successful pursuit of enjoyment and efficiency in any sphere or relation of life.

The happiest mother is always the devoted mother. She whose only thought of her children is of getting enjoyment from them, has no enjoyment in them. She has all the



trials of motherhood with none of its comforts. She, on the other hand, who lives for her children; who would do anything for them; who seeks to make them happy, has a delight in her children, receives joy from them, which no mother less devoted can know. The husband whose chief thought of a wife is of some one to make him happy, has no true home happiness. It is only he who is asking constantly, What can I do for my wife? how can I lighten her burdens? how can I gratify her tastes? how can I add to her pleasures? who knows the fullest enjoyment of married life. It is a beautiful touch of true wifeliness in Dora, the child-wife of David Copperfield, which makes her find pleasure in sitting quietly by her husband's side to hold his little stock of pens, which he frequently changes as he writes, because she longs to do something for him, and has found that she can give him help in his literary pursuits in no other way.

No real pleasure is found in any friendship except as a desire to prove one's self a help-

ful, inspiring, comforting friend is the prevailing purpose of heart in that friendship. A readiness to serve, a desire of serving, is ever the measure and the proof of true affection. As it has been said of Mary of Bethany, in the exhibit of her abounding love for her divine Friend: "There was such a love in her heart for her friend and benefactor as imperatively demanded expression, and yet could not find expression in words. She must do something to relieve her pent-up emotions: she must get an alabaster box and break it, and pour it on the person of Jesus, else her heart will break."

In the ordinary vocations of life, a man finds pleasure in his business or in his profession in proportion as he is devoted to it. If he thinks of it only as a means of support, it is a drudgery to him. But if he loves it for its own sake he can work for it night and day without tiring. Its demands on him become a delight, and he has happiness in its prosecution. It is the man who thinks his business is worth risking his life

for, or whose profession is dearer to him than wealth or ease or personal safety, who has satisfaction in all his labors and sacrifices in that occupation year by year.

The true soldier is a devoted soldier. He loves the cause for which he is in service, or the commander who represents that cause; and he is happiest when he can do most for the object of his devotion. The greatest commanders have always been those who were most successful in securing the personal attachment of their soldiers; and no soldiers have had such enjoyment or such efficiency in service as those who were readiest to give their strength and to risk their lives for those who were over them. Nor is a soldier ashamed of his uniform, because it shows that he is in his commander's, or his country's, service. The proudest badges of nobility are often the collars or yokes of service—insignia of office in subjection to an honored sovereign. All the way along in life, in every department and sphere, there is no enjoyment except

as a result of devotion; no comfort except through consecration. Why should we wonder that the same is true of the service of Christ?

He who wants the joys of Christ's service must first be in Christ's service. Consecration must precede comfort in the believer's life. He must look to Jesus for direction, before he calls on Jesus for assistance. His first thought in the morning must be, What can I do for my Master? not, What can my Helper do for me? So long as he is looking at Jesus merely as one to give him help and comfort and peace, he will fail to find what he looks for. But when he looks at Jesus as one whom he loves, and lives for, and is ready to die for; as one whose badge of service he is proud of, and whom he enjoys doing anything and everything for,—then he will have help and comfort and peace, according to the order of nature in all devoted service, and according to the specific and unfailing word of Jesus in this sphere.

## XV.

### *THE GAIN OF LOWER IDEALS THAN THE DIVINE.*

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Man's best endeavors are always in the direction of some external ideal; for, although an ideal is a standard of perfectness or of beauty which exists in the mind, that ideal standard is always formed by mental comparisons with existing realities which are outside of the mind. The genesis of the ideal must come from without, before the evolution of the ideal can begin from within. No artist can conceive a form or a hue of beauty, until he has perceived beauty in outline and in color with the natural eye. If, indeed, a man were born blind, no artist-sense could create for him an ideal that he could shape to delight another's eye. And as it is in the realm of sense, so it is in the realm of thought, and of action, and of character; the mind must

have its standard pattern and model in the real, in order to have the power of conceiving an inspiring ideal.

An artist's best work presupposes good models. If he be a real master in his line, the artist has found his models in nature. If he be lower than a master, he has followed some master's pattern. History or tradition tells of the living models on which were based the loftiest ideals in the art of Phidias, Praxiteles, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Murillo, and the other master artists of the ages. And to-day the features and the form and the expression of living models, or of well-known masterpieces of art, are recognized in the paintings or in the sculpture of the best of modern artists. All choicest landscape painting is the idealized portraiture of nature. In every form of strength or of beauty in architecture, there is the basis of some corresponding form in nature—in cavern, or grotto, or mountain, or rock, or tree, or leaf, or flower, or fruit, or vine. The ideal in art is ever and only the mentally transfigured real.



Music in the soul is the echo and the response of music in the outer world. No thought of the poet or of the romancer ever came to the thinker until the thinker had come to its external suggestion, in his own or in another's experience. High achievement was never a desire in the mind until high achievement was known to the mind as a possibility in the conduct of others. Nor was any attribute or trait of character ever longed after or aspired to, before that attribute or trait had been made known to the soul by its disclosure and its illustration elsewhere. The worthiest and the noblest innate promptings of a man toward the good and the true impel him to choose the best that is before him for a choice, and to reach out after the best that is above and beyond him as an object of desire; but they do not inform him what is best absolutely, before that best has, in some way, been set before him as a reality. A man's truest ideal must have its basis of conception in the truest real.

The divinely implanted conscience tells



every man that he ought to be good and do good, but a divine revelation is needful to show a man what good is, in character and in conduct. Where there is no explicit revelation of the Divine nature to guide man's thoughts of God, man's conception of God, or of the gods, is never above the reality of imperfect and depraved human nature as it is. And even where there is an explicit revelation of God's attributes, man's conception of those attributes is still vague and partial until he sees some reproduction of them, however faint, in the best traits of a fellow-man.

Here, indeed, is both the need and the proof of the Incarnation. God must be manifest in the flesh, in order that human nature could be seen in its ideal possibilities of likeness with the Divine nature. And unless God had been manifest in the flesh, the conception of Jesus Christ as a character and personality would be an impossibility to the human mind to-day. God would never have been clearly disclosed to man as an ideal of

perfectness, without the figure of Jesus Christ in the world's history. And Jesus Christ could never be the ideal figure that he is to the world, if he had not been a God-revealed reality in history.

Nor is it sufficient to have Jesus Christ as the ideal standard of human character and of human conduct, without any intermediate exhibit, between him and ourselves, of the attributes and traits which his nature personifies and illustrates. Human nature needs the inspiration and the encouragement of purely human ideals, reflecting and, so far, reproducing the one perfect Ideal, as an incentive and a pattern to worthy being and doing. We know that we ought to be like-minded with Christ; but Christ is so far above us, and we are so hopelessly unlike him at the best, that we are in danger of despairing in the struggle, while we have nothing before us but that absolutely perfect Divine-human standard of attainment. When, however, we see the likeness of Christ imaged in one trait or another of a human

follower of Christ, that trait has new attractiveness to us from its very possibility of imitation; and so the followers and witnesses of Christ become our inspiring helpers toward Christ.

Every truest follower of Christ and every exceptionally earnest servant of God to-day has before his mind some human ideal, or ideals, as his incentive and as his cheer in his daily strivings God-ward. He would never have known the beauty and the nobleness of an absolutely unselfish affection, of a simple fidelity to duty in all things, of an unswerving consistency of uprightness in conduct, of tender considerateness in word and manner toward others, of heroic bearing and doing in emergencies, if he had never seen one of those traits of character attractively illustrated in fact or in story.

It may be that it was a man's mother or his father who first held before him an inspiring ideal of character and of conduct; or, again, it may have been his teacher, or his pastor, or some companion and friend;

or, yet again, it may have been a missionary hero, or a saintly worker in the home-field, of whom he heard or read. Not, commonly, from one character alone, although often from one chiefly, the ideal has been derived, which is unfailingly before the mind of the aspiring struggler after good. And on the worthiness and the nobility of a man's human ideals of desirable attainment depends much for his own progress and ultimate gain.

Well is it for a young person if so lofty an ideal is before him in his home circle that it can remain his worthy inspiration all his life through. And well is it for an older person, who has never had a truly inspiring ideal before him, or who has outgrown his earlier ideals, if he can be made newly acquainted with a character which shall inspire him to yet unreachd attainments of good. There is no treasure on earth to be compared with an attractive human ideal of character and of conduct, which draws one ever upward and onward in the line of his best and truest nature, humbling him by his sense of lack in

that direction, while it incites him to ceaseless struggle to be better and to do better after that inspiring pattern. Unfailing gain is a certainty so long as such an ideal is all-swaying in a human life.

Whoever has a worthy ideal before him, let him thank God for its possession, and let him remember that that ideal can be to him a worthy ideal only so long as he recognizes it as a gift from God and as a help toward God. And let him who struggles toward a worthy ideal, bear in mind that even *he* may be an ideal to some one yet behind himself in the God-ward race. That thought should be an added incentive to every man to falter not nor tire in his ideal-ward strivings—for the sake of others as well as for himself.

## XVI.

### *SOMETHING BETTER THAN ANGELS.*

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All angels—all good angels—are God's "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." But, not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, are angels. There are times when only angels can help a child of God in his earthly need; and again there are times when an angel can do very little for a troubled child of God. There are some things which only angels can do; and there are some things which angels obviously cannot do. When an angel's help is available, there is nothing better than an angel's help. But when an angel is helpless for ministry to an heir of salvation, then there is something better than the help of angels. God's loving provisions



for his earthly children are not limited by the capacity and the experience of angels.

The heir of salvation, while he is an heir, has need of human sympathy; and no angel can give human sympathy, however much he longs to give it. The best that an angel can do, is to bring cheering promises, and to give material help, from God. Sympathy is based on experience, and no mere angel has entered into our human experiences—as a basis of sympathy.

When Elijah felt himself all alone as a servant of God among a sinful people; hunted for his life by a cruel queen, away from the habitations of men, weak, famishing, despairing, and finally falling asleep in his weariness,—it was an angel who came and wakened him, speaking to him words of cheer, and ministering to him in tenderness, giving him food and drink, and watching him again as he slept; awakening him once more, to send him to God for fresh assurance and direction. But the Lord knew that there was a limit to an angel's help to Elijah, and



that Elijah had need of something better than this for his permanent help. The prophet could go "forty days and forty nights" in the strength of the angelic supply of his wants; but then he would tire out as before in his wearisome work, if he were left without a sympathizing human fellow. So the Lord provided young Elisha to be a companion helper of Elijah; and from that hour Elijah seems never to have been without the loving presence of that human helper, until the ascending prophet looked down through the opening heavens upon his earthly companion and successor.

When Paul was on the storm-driven ship, with neither sun nor stars appearing for weeks together,—not one, nor all, of his two hundred and seventy-five despairing shipmates, could speak the word which should assure him of his earthly future. An angel of God must be deputed for that service. So the angel was sent; as God is always ready to supply the angel-ministry which his children's necessities require. But when the

storm was over, and the winter was passed, and the shores of Italy were finally reached, and Paul, the prisoner, was nearing the city of the Cæsars, his human heart had its human longings for that human sympathy which no heaven-deputed angel could bring to him; therefore God saw to it that Christian brethren from Rome went down along the road to meet the soldier-bound apostle: "Whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage." Those sympathizing brethren were better than angels in their ministry to Paul; for their ministry of sympathy was beyond the possibilities of angel ministry.

There are times when one loving, tender, sympathizing human helper can give us more of courage and cheer in our desponding earthly struggle, or in our trial of loneliness, than a legion of angels would be able to. Our Saviour recognized this truth when he would come into the world to evidence to the race his love and sympathy. "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and

blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same. . . . For verily not of angels doth he take hold, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren."

And it is because Jesus was here in flesh and blood, having the nature of the sons of men, and not the nature of angels, that he can sympathize with us, being "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," he having been "in all points tempted like as we are," although "without sin." Thus there is a power of personal sympathy with us on the part of our loving Saviour, which he cannot delegate to an angel who was never of our nature, to the extent that he can delegate it to one of his human servants and representatives. In other words, Jesus himself can do for us by means of our human fellows what he cannot do for us by angel ministries; and he can do through us for others of his children, beyond all that he could do for them through the angels. So

it is, that there is something better than angels in the provisions of God's grace for the heirs of salvation.

There are many trials which no angel could understand, and which we are inclined to think no other human being than ourselves can feel the weight of. It is a comfort, in such a case, to be assured that we are understood and sympathized with by some one who would gladly help us if he could. A loving look, a look of fellow-suffering in our behalf, the pressure of a warm hand, a start or a shiver of pain because of our pain, even an unexpressed though not an undisclosed sense of personal sympathy with us in our peculiar burden-bearing, is sometimes far more helpful to us than many words of inspired counsel could prove.

If, indeed, we were seriously and honestly in doubt as to God's wisdom and love, or as to the ultimate issue of our severest trials, then an angel's assurances might benefit us beyond any human ministry. But when we know that it is all right that we

should suffer as we do, and that good will finally come of it, it is better to be told that some one knows how hard it is for us to bear up under this all, than to be told that it is our duty, and that it is for our highest advantage, to endure patiently, and in faith, unto the end.

It is those who have been through trials themselves, those who have been bereaved, or betrayed, or disappointed, and who have suffered and sorrowed accordingly, whose words and looks of appreciative sympathy come home to our hearts in our hours of need, as no words of well-meant instruction or encouragement can come at such a time. All of us have felt the difference between the ministry, in our sorrow, of one who could say, out of an overflowing heart, "I know all about it. It is terrible;" and one who could only speak out of a loving heart which had never bled from wounds like this. Even in the closest friendship, there is more comfort in being thoroughly understood in our weaknesses, than in being admired in

our strength. Appreciation is in itself the truest and most helpful affection.

In the light of this truth, do we not see a new cause for rejoicing in our own peculiar experiences of temptation and struggle and endurance and sorrow? Apart from any question of our personal need of chastisement, or of discipline, or of progress toward holiness, through those experiences which try us most sorely, we are, by their agency, being fitted for a better than an angel's ministry to our Saviour's loved ones. We could never do such work for Christ, without these experiences, as we can do through their enduring and improving. No one, on earth or in heaven, in the lack of such experiences as these, could do the work which we are thus preparing to do.

## XVII.

### *WHAT WE OWE TO THE SLEEPLESS.*

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It is because there are others who will not sleep, that we have the privilege of sleeping in restfulness and in safety. And it is because of the wakeful watching of those who cannot sleep, that our wakeful hours have much of their added cheer and helpfulness. Sleeping and waking we are indebted to those who wake while others sleep; and it behooves us to be mindful of our multiplied obligations to the sleepless.

In our city or our village homes we go to our sleep at night with a feeling of security because of the wakefulness of policemen and of other watchers, who guard our persons and our property while we sleep. Riding across the country by railroad at night, we lie down to sleep as restfully as in our



homes, because of our confidence in the sleepless watching of engineer and of brakemen on the train, and of guards at the bridges and the switches along our track. Crossing the ocean, we seek rest in our berths without anxiety, because we know that at the pilot-house, on the deck, at the lookout, and in the engine-rooms below, there are keen eyes that will not sleep. And so on land or sea, at home or abroad, we have reason to realize our indebtedness to those who wake while others sleep.

From the beginning of our troubled life to its fevered close, our safety pivots on the willing sleeplessness of those who watch in our behalf. It is because the loving mother will not give way to sleep, when her tired body and her throbbing head long for it, and she keeps awake only by the exercise of all her firm will, prompted by the best impellings of her whole true heart, that the helpless child is brought safely through the varied trials and ills of infancy. It is only as the devoted wife or sister, or as the skilled nurse,

watches in tireless wakefulness by the bedside of the strong man struggling with acute disease, that he on whom the family, the community, or the nation, leans is held to continued life, and is raised to renewed activities in health. It is, indeed, by the sleeplessness of the sleepless, that the sleeping and the waking of those who sleep and wake bring rest and refreshing, and are guarded from unnumbered perils.

The importance of sleeplessness on the part of those who must watch while others sleep, is brought out and emphasized in that article of war which makes it a crime punishable with death for a soldier on guard to sleep on his post. On that soldier's sleeplessness there may depend the safety of his command, the issue of a campaign, the life of a nation, the current of a century's history. If, therefore, he sleeps, he must die; for many may die as a consequence of his failure to be sleepless. A sense of his responsibility as a watcher goes far to enable a soldier-sentry to keep awake on his post

when his eyes are heavy with sleep. A corresponding sense of indebtedness to him for his fidelity in being sleepless ought to have a place in the minds of those who are saved by that soldier-sentry's waking and watching. And it is true that no one so fully realizes how hard and how important it is that a soldier on guard should be a sleepless soldier, as does a soldier who has himself been compelled to faithful sleeplessness in such a place.

At the close of the terrible series of seven days' fights in the vicinity of Richmond, in the second year of our civil war, when General McClellan was making his move from the Chickahominy to the James, a detachment of cavalry was ordered in advance to the position which the Union Army was to occupy near Harrison's Landing. A young officer of that detachment had assigned to him, at night, the picketing of an extended line, with only ten men at his service. It was a critical time. His force was pitifully insufficient for its purpose; but it was all he

had. The best he could do, therefore, was to do the best he could. If he could guard that line until daylight, he would do all that he was asked to do. But his men were already well-nigh exhausted through prolonged active service without sleep; and he feared that some of them would be unable to keep awake. His own added sense of responsibility enabled him to be sleepless even while as tired as any of his men.

Anxious and faithful, that young officer moved from post to post all the night through, keeping watch of the watchers. As he neared one man on this outpost duty, he found him asleep. At a glance he took in the whole situation, and he acted in view of it. Arousing the sleeper, he brought him face to face with his peril. Asleep on his post, in the presence of the enemy! The penalty of that crime was death. The officer reminded the soldier of this. The soldier realized it. "But," added the officer, in generous consideration, "I know how tired you are, and I know the service which has worn you

out. We are all tired together. But this line must be guarded, and we must keep awake to-night. Now give me your carbine, and lie down and get a nap. I'll take your place here for half an hour. Then you must get up, and you must keep awake; for there's no 'relief' to us until daylight." And that officer insisted on carrying out this arrangement to the letter. As the tired cavalryman stretched himself for his needed and longed-for sleep, he realized as never before his indebtedness to one whose sleeplessness enabled him to sleep; and to the day of his death that lesson was never forgotten by him who learned it then and there. There is not one of us who has not in some way had cause for similar gratitude to one whose sleeplessness has secured to us the privilege of needful sleep.

There is, in fact, no promise of God's loving fidelity to those who trust him which is more precious as it stands, or for which we have more reason to be grateful, than the promise of his tireless sleeplessness as the

watcher over his dear ones, and as "he giveth unto his beloved in [their] sleep:"

"He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:  
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.  
Behold, he that keepeth Israel  
Shall neither slumber nor sleep."

Therefore it is that the Psalmist says, and therefore it is that every one of us can say:

"In peace will I both lay me down and sleep:  
For thou, Lord, alone makest me dwell in safety."

But it is not alone those who wake and watch of their own choice, as a matter of duty, to whose sleeplessness we are indebted for much that we have reason to be grateful for. Those who *cannot* sleep are, in many an instance, enabled by their very sleeplessness to be a means of good to us beyond all that they could compass in our behalf if they slept as others sleep. There are sorrows and sufferings which forbid sleep, but which enrich the soul of the sleepless one; and out of such sleeplessness there comes a blessing to all who are within the sweep of its benefi-



cent influence. Paul and Silas, with their smarting backs and their fettered feet in their inner dungeon at Philippi, could not sleep, but in their sleeplessness they could sing God's praises with such added sweetness and power that the strains of their rejoicing filled the ears of their heaviest-hearted companions in bondage, and transformed the gloomy prison-house into a sanctuary of light and peace in Christian believing. And the song-filled sleeplessness of weary prisoners of grief and pain is one of the potent forces of good in the universe of God to-day.

“Lo! a band of pale  
Yet joyful priests do minister around  
The altar, where the lights are burning low  
In the breathless night. Each grave brow wears  
the crown  
Of sorrow, and each heart is kept awake  
By its own restless pain; for these are they  
To whom the night watch is appointed. See!  
They lift their hands, and bless God in the night!  
Whilst we are sleeping, those to whom the King  
Has measured out a cup of sorrow, sweet  
With his dear love, yet very hard to drink,  
Are waiting in his temple, and the eyes



That cannot sleep for sorrow or for pain  
Are lifted up to heaven; and sweet low songs,  
Broken by patient tears, arise to God.  
Bless ye the Lord, ye servants of the Lord,  
Which stand by night within his holy place  
To give him worship! Ye are priests to him,  
And minister around the altar, pale  
Yet joyful in the night."

And because of this loving, grateful service of God's sleepless worshipers, we who sleep and rest are sharers in the blessing which their devotion brings.

It is in the hours of sleeplessness from sorrow and pain that the faithful heart grows tenderest toward God and toward God's dear ones; and it is only through these experiences in sleeplessness that any God-inspired comforter of those who mourn or who suffer acquires his chiefest power of comforting. He who has never been so racked and tried that he could not sleep, cannot speak intelligibly to the heart of hearts of a sleepless sufferer. And he whose words come home to every aching heart like strength-bringing balm, is sure to be one who has

waked and watched involuntarily while others slept restfully. To realize this truth is inevitably to give us a new sense of our indebtedness to those who have acquired their power to help us at the cost of wearying sleeplessness.

There is comfort in this truth to those who cannot sleep. Because there is new power for good through waking and watching while others sleep, that sleeplessness which is unwelcome for its own sake can be welcomed for Christ's sake. When we must count the long hours of darkness drearily, through pain or sorrow that will not let us sleep, we can thank God that by this means we are gaining an insight of his love, and a nearness to himself, that shall enable us to minister in his name to those whose needs can be met only through our wise use of sleeplessness.

## XVIII.

### *THE MINISTRY OF SORROW.*

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The pain of sorrow is readily perceived; but the gain of sorrow it is not so easy to recognize. Yet to no experience of our human life do we owe more for the development and the perfecting of our personal character, and for the bringing of us into right relations with our fellows and with our God, than to the experiences of sorrow. Indeed, it may be said that none of us are at our best save through God's ministry of sorrow to us, and in us, and through us; and that the measure of our tenderness, of our sympathy, of our practical helpfulness, and of our abiding and prevailing faith, corresponds with the measure of our wise improvement of our personal sorrows.

To have sorrow is a very different thing from being sorry. To be sorry is simply to

be sore-y; to wince under pain caused by our own or by another's loss or misdoing. To have sorrow is to have "mental suffering under the privation of some good we actually possessed, or concerning which we entertained a pleasing expectation;" it is to grieve over a lost good, or under a present evil. Sorrow is deeper and more permanent than sorriness. It does not always move one's innermost being to be sorry; but one cannot have real sorrow save as his innermost being is moved. If, indeed, it were not for the ministry of sorrow, the highest ministry of joy would be unknown to us. We could neither love nor be loved at the best without the lessons of this ministry; and only thereby can we know the full blessings of memory, of hope, and of faith.

It is discipline, not indulgence, that develops character; and discipline comes rather through our losses than through our retainings. Living on in ease and comfort, and in the possession of all that our hearts have known a longing for, we have no call to the

exercise of high courage, of heroic endurance, and of sublime patience. He who has never known sorrow, has never made that attainment in character, through discipline of character, of which his nature is capable.

“O sacred sorrow! he who knows not thee  
Knows not the best emotions of the heart.”

There is always more or less of a lack in a character which is inexperienced in sorrow. And every truly admirable personal character, every great and noble character, every most winsome character, is a character which has known sorrow, and which has secured the gain of sorrow through the acceptance and improvement of sorrow in its noblest ministry. Our one Pattern of character and of attainment was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;” and it is divinely declared that it was needful that he should be made “perfect”—should be brought to the highest conceivable standard of character—“through sufferings.” God says to every child of his love, “I have chosen thee in the

furnace of affliction." And every sorrow-smitten child of God will, sooner or later, have reason to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

"Man, till the fire hath purged him, doth remain  
Mixed with all dross:  
To lack the loving discipline of pain  
Were endless loss."

Yet sorrow is never anything less than sorrow, and as sorrow it is always hard to bear. This, indeed, is one of the primal elements of its helpful ministry. If all our losses were losses which we could see the reason of, or which we could endure with entire calmness, our innermost nature would not be moved by our losses. If all our griefs were griefs which brought their own consolation with them, there would be no sense of hopelessness in the overpowering and bewildering mystery of our grief. But, as it is, "all chastening"—through real sorrow—"seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous;" even though "afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been" rightly "exercised

thereby." "Ah," says Madame Guyon, "if you knew what peace there is in an accepted sorrow!"—in a sorrow accepted in its divinely designed ministry of good. Henry Vaughan says quaintly:

"Affliction is a mother,  
Whose painful throes yield many sons,  
Each fairer than the other."

But all this is in the "afterward," not in the immediate presence of a freshly experienced sorrow. At the first a sorrow is even more than a sorrow; for, as Shakespeare has it:

"Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows,  
Which shows like grief itself, but is not so;  
For sorrow's grief, glazed with blinding tears,  
Divides one thing entire, to many objects."

And it is only through the experience of a sorrow that seems unbearable, that one gains in his personal character through bearing up and bearing on, by being upborne.

The chiefest gain in the ministry of sorrow is in its bringing the stricken one to a sense of helpless dependence on God. It is not



that the loving hand of God is always instantly recognized in sorrow; for it is often the case that a great sorrow seems to put, for the time, a cloud between the believer and his God, and the breaking heart cries out piteously under the heavier load than it can bear. But it is that, even from under the cloud and from beneath the crushing burden, the cry, although piteous or despairing, is a God-ward cry. As Mrs. Browning tells us, in her "Cry of the Human:"

" 'There is no God,' the foolish saith,  
     But none, 'There is no sorrow;'  
 And nature oft the cry of faith  
     In bitter need will borrow.  
 Eyes which the preacher could not school,  
     By wayside graves are raised,  
 And lips say, 'God be pitiful!'  
     Who ne'er said, 'God be praised!'"

And it is in this very tendency of sorrow that there is, so far, a gain to the soul which sorrows. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." It is when man is consciously helpless that God can be man's sufficiency. Thus

it is that God's strength is made perfect, is shown in its completeness, in and through man's weakness. And thus it is, as the godly Faber says, that:

“Good is that darkening of our lives,  
Which only God can brighten;  
But better still that hopeless load  
Which none but God can lighten.”

Sorrow's ministry to us begins by its shutting us up to help and hope in God alone.

But there is a ministry to us in the loving sympathy of others in our sorrow; and it is for us to minister to others through our new attainments by sorrow. We should never know how many hearts are drawn to us in loving sympathy, if we were never in sorrow; nor, indeed, could we be the means of drawing the hearts of so many to us in tenderness, if we were never sorrow-smitten. More share with us in our sorrows than could ever share with us in our enjoyments. And more are prompt to express *this* sense of sympathy than *that*. Those who would stand aloof from us while all went well, are

moved to tell us freely, or to show us clearly, how their hearts bleed with and for us in our grief. We may even gain love through losing our loved ones. And through the lesson of our sorrow, and through our new sense of the value of loving sympathy in the hour of sorrow, we are fitted to be ministers of sympathy and cheer to the sorrowing.

Says Esther Maurice Hare, in her Letters to her sisters in sorrow: "Sorrow is a force of incalculable power; able, rightly applied, 'to move mountains.' . . . Rightly viewed, sorrow is a gift, as much as our wealth or our health; and we must as much prepare to be asked what we have done with the one, as how we have used the other. For sorrow is as fruitful of graces as charity itself." Hence a ministry of sorrow through us to others, is that ministry by which we "comfort them that are in any affliction through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

One of the most comforting ministries of sorrow, when the true ministry of sorrow is

recognized and accepted by the child of God, is the proof it brings to the sorrow-stricken one of the abounding love of God, and of the loving nearness of God. "God does not afflict willingly, nor [willingly] grieve the children of men." It is "whom the Lord loveth" that he causeth to sorrow; and when the Lord has reluctantly laid a burden of sorrow on one whom he loves, the Lord knows just how heavily that burden presses, and no human heart can have such loving sympathy with the one who sorrows as has the Lord himself. The heavier the sorrow, the surer the sustaining presence of Him who has permitted it to his loved one:

"He gives his angels charge of those who sleep:  
But He himself watches with those who wake."

And so it is that the ministry of sorrow is God's ministry of love to us, and in us, and through us, by his grace. By that grace "our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look

not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

"Should Sorrow lay her hand upon thy shoulder,  
And walk with thee in silence on life's way,  
While Joy, the bright companion once, grown colder,  
Becomes more distant day by day;  
Shrink not from the companionship of Sorrow,  
She is the messenger of God to thee;  
And thou wilt thank him in his great to-morrow,—  
For what thou know'st not now, thou then shalt  
see;—  
She is God's angel, clad in weeds of night,  
With whom 'we walk by faith, and not by sight.'"

## XIX.

### *WHAT OUR DEAD DO FOR US.*

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Much of the best work of the world is done through the present personal influence of the dead. And in our estimate of the forces which give us efficiency, we ought to assign a large place to the power over us, and in us, of loved ones whom we mourn as wholly removed from us. Yet this is a view of the truth which we are prone to lose sight of.

When death takes away one on whom we have leaned, or to whom we have looked up, or with whom we have toiled and endured and joyed, or for whom we have had care and responsibility,—we recognize the mystery, and we feel the sorrow, of the event; while, at the same time, we are ready to believe that it is better for that dear one, in his new sphere of existence, than it could

have been for him here. We know that there has been no mistake on the part of Him with whom are the issues of life and of death; and that the career of usefulness for which the departed child of God had been preparing so faithfully, or on the outer verge of which he still stood, has not been utterly closed against him, in his dying; but that somehow and somewhere he is continuing to serve and to glorify God in tireless activity. For him, we have no fear. But the temptation to us is, to feel that his work for *us* is done, and that henceforth, while we live on here, we must live on without his presence or aid. Yet, as a practical fact and as a great spiritual truth, our dead do for us as constantly and as variously as they could do for us if they were still here in the flesh; and they do for us very much that they could not do unless they were dead.

Some of the saintly faces of fathers and mothers, which are a benediction to all who look at them, could never have shone as now with the reflected light of heaven, unless



they had been summoned to frequent upward lookings through the clouds, in loving communion with their children in heaven. There are manly and womanly children, who are more serious and earnest and devoted in their young life-struggles, because of their constant sense of the over-watching presence of their dead parents. Many a mature life has more of symmetry, and more of strength and beauty, as a result of the chastened and hallowed memories of an early great sorrow through bereavement, which seemed as if it would utterly crush the young heart, but which really gave to that heart an unfailing tenderness of sympathy, and a limitless capacity for clinging devotedness, which would have been an impossibility with less of a trial through death. And so the dead live on here, for, and with, and in, those who mourn and remember them as gone hence forever; and, living on, they live to bless.

Our living friends do much for us, but perhaps our dead friends do yet more. We do what we can for our friends while we live;

but possibly, if we were to die, we could be more of a help and more of an inspiration to those who are dearer than life to us. Cardinal Newman voices this thought tenderly, when he says of the grief and the gain of David in the death of his peerless friend Jonathan:

“Yet it was well:—for so, ’mid cares of rule  
 And crime’s encircling tide,  
 A spell was o’er thee, zealous one, to cool  
 Earth-joy and kingly pride;  
 With battle-scene and pageant, prompt to blend  
 The pale calm specter of a blameless friend.

“Ah! had he lived, before thy throne to stand,  
 Thy spirit keen and high  
 Sure it had snapped in twain love’s slender band,  
 So dear in memory;  
 Paul, of his comrade reft, the warning gives,—  
 He lives to us who dies; he is but lost who lives.”

When the aged Simeon welcomed the child Jesus in the temple courts at Jerusalem, his words of prophecy concerning the wondrous possibilities in the infant Messiah included a distinct reference to the good that

should be done to the world through the suffering and the sorrow which the death of that Son should cause to his agony-stricken mother. "Yea, and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul," he said to her; "that thoughts out of many hearts shall be revealed." And how much to this world has been the soul-moving power of the Virgin Mother's sorrow over the death of her Son!

There is light and cheer in the loving face of the pictured Madonna with her infant Child; but there is no such touching of the innermost heart, and revealing of the more secret and more sacred thoughts of the mind, in that blessed face, as there is in the upturned look of the bleeding-hearted Mater Dolorosa. And of all the representations of the Mother and Child, by the great artists of the ages, no other approaches—in its power of heart-touching and of thought-revealing—that wonderful face in the Sistine Madonna, where the far-away look of the tear-starting eyes gives a fore-gleam of the

sword-piercing sorrow of the mother of the Crucified One.

And when Jesus himself was about to die, he distinctly assured his loved disciples that he could do more for them after his death than he could do by continuing to live with them here in the flesh. "Because I have spoken this thing unto you, sorrow has filled your heart," he said. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you." There is a sense in which this truth applies to every follower of Jesus, as it applied to Jesus. There is a peculiar influence of redeemed souls over their dear ones still on earth, which cannot be exercised except as a result of death.

"They never quite leave us, our friends who have  
passed

Through the shadows of death to the sunlight  
above;

A thousand sweet memories are holding them fast  
To the places they blest with their presence and  
love.

"The work which they left, and the books which  
they read,  
Speak mutely, though still with an eloquence  
rare;  
And the songs that they sung, the dear words that  
they said,  
Yet linger and sigh on the desolate air.

"And oft when alone, and as oft in the throng,  
Or when evil allures us, or sin draweth nigh,  
A whisper comes gently, 'Nay, do not the wrong;'  
And we feel that our weakness is pitied on high."

It is not that we should be unwilling to live on, doing our best for our dear ones here, because of the possibility of our doing yet more for them through our dying. Nor yet is it, that we should part from our dear ones without a pang of sorrow, when they are called away by death, because their dying will bring them added joy and larger influence, and may give them more power for good over our own lives, as we continue our earthly course without their visible companionship. But it is that, in our thought of being taken away from those whom we love, we need not feel that we shall thereby

be lost to all possibility of loving ministry to their comfort and welfare; and that, in the bitterness of our keenest grief over the death of our loved ones, there may be the consoling thought that we do not lose the stimulus and the inspiration of their memories, nor part, even for the time being, with the more sacred influence of their example, and of their spiritual fellowship.

To them and to us alike, "whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died, and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living." And they who are in Christ, will not fail of a part in the work of Christ for those who are dear to themselves and to their Saviour.



## XX.

### *THE AFTERMATH OF INFLUENCE.*

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Who, that has lived in the country, does not know the mellow and refreshing beauty of the autumn "aftermath," on some hillside field, or in some sweeping meadow which had seemed given over to winter's death, but is marvelously restored to spring-tide's life? That field had been plowed and sown and harrowed. The seed had sprung up and brought forth fully after its kind. Then the mower had come, the scythe had been swung, and the grain or the grass had been gathered into the barns. The mowed field lay desolate and bare under the summer's sun and the latter rains. But up from the hidden life-giving roots of the garnered crop there sprang fresh blades of promise and beauty, and again the wide-spreading field rejoiced in its covering of verdure. Another harvest was made



ready for; and there were life and bloom where had seemed only decay and death. There is an added beauty and an added preciousness in the "aftermath" of the husbandman's grass crop from the very fact of its unexpectedness, and its token of abounding fulness in the field. The first harvest had been looked for in the ordinary course of nature; the second could not but be reckoned of grace.

In the field of mind and character, as in the grass-field, there is an aftermath of influence which is not always taken into account in our plannings for the harvest, but which has an impressiveness and a value which are all its own. As in the natural world, so in the world of influence, the aftermath has a peculiar beauty under the light of its autumnal skies; and in this field, as *not* in the other, it is commonly the larger and more important garnering of the two. The aftermath of influence is likely to be the real measure of influence in any sphere; and until the aftermath is gathered from the field, none can say

with any positiveness what shall be the harvest there.

The first garnering of a mother's, or a teacher's, or a pastor's, influence, in the field of a child's mind, sometimes seems to give no return for the labor it has cost; and, after it all, the field looks bare and hopeless enough. The harvest is past and the summer is ended, and that child is not saved; but *then* for the aftermath. John Newton's mother died when he was scarcely seven years old. She had faithfully sowed the seed of truth in his mind; but he grew up godless and vicious. A profane infidel sailor, the servant of a slave-dealer, and again a public felon, bound in irons and flogged at the whipping-post, his manhood's harvest was a poor garnering for his mother's sowing. But underneath the surface of his heart's soil lay buried the memory of that mother's hand upon his head in prayer as he kneeled with her, in his boyhood. The loving pressure of that hand was never wholly lost to him. It was felt by him, at times, in all his darkest days of sinning; and, by God's

grace, it gently drew him back to the place of faith-filled prayer. From that root of impressions there came the starting of new life in all the field of his mind and heart; and the aftermath of his mother's influence has filled the world with song and story. And so, to a lesser or a larger degree, with many another wayward boy.

In a city mission-school in Hartford, Connecticut, nearly forty years ago, a kind-hearted teacher toiled faithfully and endured patiently with one boy in his class who seemed thoroughly and hopelessly bad. He visited that boy in his wretched home, he invited him to his own pleasant room, he clothed him, found one place after another of employment for him, spoke to him always in kindness, counseling and warning him untiringly; but all to no seeming purpose. The boy was still wild, coarse, profane, reckless, ungrateful. At last he ran away from his home, and shipped on a Liverpool vessel from New York. The end had come to his life in that mission-school; but what a harvest for all that sowing!

Three years went by. Then from far up in British India word came from that boy, saying that he was a soldier in the English Army under Sir Colin Campbell, battling against the Sepoys. Already he had marched eight hundred miles, and endured untold privations and hardships. But there, in that far land, shut in among the mountains, away from home and Christian surroundings, sick in body and sad in spirit, he had recalled the lessons of his Hartford mission-school; and now the aftermath of his discouraged teacher's influence showed itself in his words of penitence and gratitude, and of trust in his Redeemer's love.

The hope of the aftermath of influence may well stay the fainting heart of parent and teacher and preacher, when the first harvest in a well-sown and well-tilled field is a disappointment and a mockery. While there is life below the surface, there is hope for a new garnering above it. It is natural and proper to expect the greatest good in the immediate results of influence; but we are encouraged

also to believe that the secondary, or the ultimate, results of good influence may be larger and better than the primary results. If not now, then by and by. If not in the first garnering, then in the aftermath.

“Age is opportunity no less  
Than youth itself, though in another dress;  
And as the evening twilight fades away,  
The sky is filled with stars invisible by day.”

There is a warning, as well as an encouragement, in this thought of the aftermath of influence; for it is a truth as applicable to evil seed as to good. This is peculiarly apparent in the case of many a man of lovely spirit and of admirable personal qualities who embraces error and teaches it. His immediate influence is largely on the side of right, and the first harvest of his life teachings gives much to rejoice over. But, after he has passed away, up from the roots of error which he planted, there springs a noxious growth which results in a sad harvest of evil to the world. His followers evidence the pernicious nature of his beliefs, without the redeeming qualities

which gave them attractiveness as he held them. Our peculiar personal faults of speech, or manner, or conduct, seem only flaws—or hardly that—to those who know us at our best; but the aftermath of our influence, through what we say, or what we do, or what we are, in the wrong direction, may be such as would make the angels weep.

Seed-sowing in the field of influence is always for more than one harvest. There is the sure aftermath, as well as the first garnering. Whether of good or evil, there is life in the root even after all that was above the surface has been cut away. What you do, and, more than all, what you are, to-day, is to have power over others, or in others, not only to-day, but in the long-distant future. "The teacher," says Confucius, "is a pattern for ten thousand ages;" and every person is, in one sense or another, a teacher. The chief harvest of our influence may be to-day; and again it may be ten thousand ages hence—whatever may seem our failure or our success to-day.

“ Read we not the mighty thought  
Once by ancient sages taught?  
Though it withered in the blight  
Of the mediæval night,  
Now the harvest we behold;  
See! it bears a thousand-fold.

“ If God’s wisdom has decreed  
One may labor, yet the seed  
Barely in this life shall grow,  
Shall the sower cease to sow?  
The fairest truth may yet be born  
On the resurrection morn.”













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